

DEC 10



# the christian SCHOLAR

The Quarterly Journal of the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America



First Article in series on Theology of Education by Will Herberg. Articles on Poetry by Nathan A. Scott, Jr. / Douglas Knight / Eric Larrabee / Amos N. Wilder and others. Reviews by Paul L. Ward / John H. Hallowell and others. Reports. Volume xxxvi Number 4 December 1953

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

36 East Main Street, Somerville, New Jersey  
Quarterly Publication of  
Commission on Christian Higher Education  
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.  
257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York  
(Continuing the former quarterly journal, *Christian Education*)

---

J. Edward Dirks, Editor

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Ralph E. Himstead, General Secretary  
American Association of University Professors  
Washington, D. C.

Douglas Knight  
Department of English  
Yale University  
New Haven, Connecticut

Gerald E. Knoff, Executive Secretary  
Division of Christian Education, National  
Council of Churches  
New York, New York

Raymond F. McLain, General Director  
Commission on Christian Higher Education  
National Council of Churches  
New York, New York

Bernard J. Mulder, General Secretary  
Board of Education  
Reformed Church in America  
New York, New York

James A. Pike, Dean  
Cathedral of St. John the Divine  
New York, New York

William G. Pollard, Executive Director  
Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

William H. Potest  
Department of Philosophy  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

William Savage, Religious Editor  
Charles Scribner's Sons  
New York, New York

Seymour A. Smith  
Religion in Higher Education  
Yale Divinity School  
New Haven, Connecticut

Guy E. Snavely, Executive Director  
Association of American Colleges  
Washington, D. C.

Ordway Tead, Editor  
Social and Economic Books  
Harper & Brothers  
New York, New York

Andrew G. Truxal, President  
Hood College  
Frederick, Maryland

Ruth Wick, Executive Secretary  
United Student Christian Council  
New York, New York

Walter E. Wiest  
Counselor to Protestant Students  
Columbia University  
New York, New York

---

Reentered as second-class matter June, 1953, at the Post Office at Somerville, N. J., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Request for reentry at Somerville, N. J., is pending. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 18, 1918. The subscription price is \$3.00 per annum. Single copies, regular issue, 75 cents.

The cover was designed by Joseph C. Graves; original woodcuts were made by Fritz Kredel; type is American Uncial designed by Victor Hammer; and, it was printed by Robert Haas at the Ram Press.

# The Christian Scholar

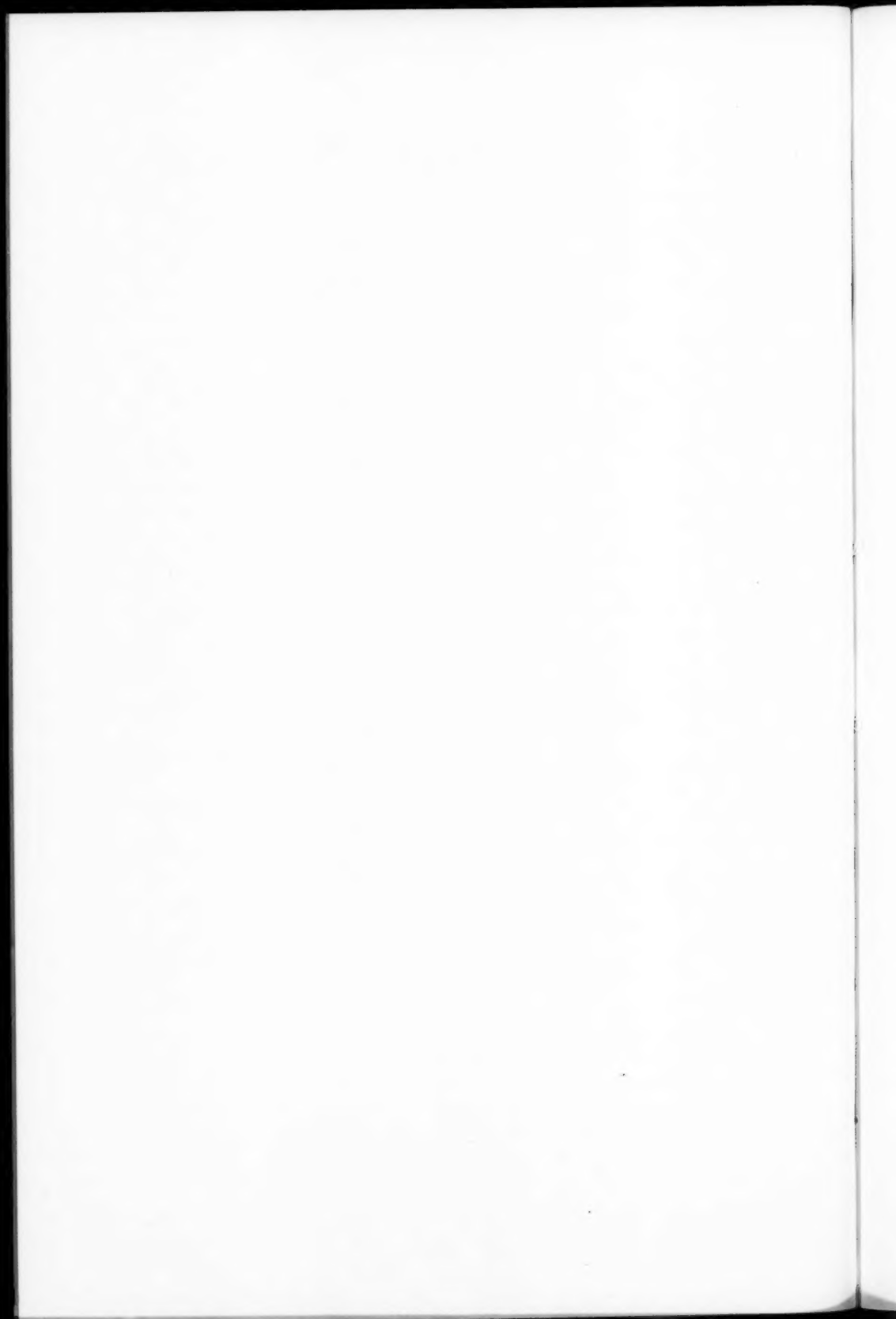
VOLUME XXXVI

NUMBER 4

DECEMBER, 1953

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
The Editor's Preface .....	257
TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION . <i>Will Herberg</i>	259
POETRY AND THE CRISIS OF METAPHYSICS . <i>Nathan A. Scott, Jr.</i>	273
THE VALIDATION OF POETRY (A Comment) ..... <i>Douglas Knight</i>	281
DURER'S NATIVITY (Poem) ..... <i>Arnold Kenseth</i>	284
SCIENCE, POETRY, AND POLITICS ..... <i>Eric Larrabee</i>	285
HE DIGESTETH HARDE YRON ..... <i>Amos N. Wilder</i>	293
FIRST DAY, 1953 (Poem) ..... <i>Jon Swan</i>	296
THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR AND HIS	
COLLEAGUES ..... <i>T. S. K. Scott-Craig</i>	297
BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS .....	300
<i>The Christian Approach to Culture</i>	
by <i>Emile Cailliet</i> .....	<i>John Dillenberger</i> 300
<i>Goals of Economic Life</i>	
by <i>A. Dudley Ward</i> , Editor .....	<i>Wolfgang F. Stolper</i> 301
<i>Christianity and the Problem of History</i>	
by <i>Roger Lincoln Shinn</i> .....	<i>Paul L. Ward</i> 305
<i>Christian Faith and Social Action</i>	
by <i>John A. Hutchison</i> , Editor .....	<i>John H. Hallowell</i> 309
<i>Community Welfare Organization</i>	
by <i>Herbert Hewitt Stroup</i> .....	<i>Oliver R. Whitley</i> 311
<i>A Brother to Dragons</i> by <i>Robert Penn Warren</i> .....	<i>Amos N. Wilder</i> 313
<i>The Image of God in Man</i> by <i>David S. Cairns</i> .....	<i>J. Robert Nelson</i> 315
Notes on Publications .....	317
REPORTS AND NOTICES .....	319
The Department of Campus Christian Life .....	319
The United Student Christian Council .....	321
The Faculty Christian Fellowship .....	323
The Committee on Religion in Higher Education of the	
Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. . <i>R. Elizabeth Johns and Kirtley F. Mather</i>	324
The Revised Standard Version .....	<i>Luther A. Weigle</i> 330



## The Editor's Preface

**B**ECAUSE THIS QUARTERLY is devoted to exploration of higher education from the perspective of the Christian faith and heritage, as it is being rediscovered in both the current theological renaissance and the revolution of our time, our readers will not be surprised to find that much of this number is devoted to poetry and modern thought. In another issue we will present materials related to others of the arts, including painting, drama, and music. Certainly the arts, generally, are again becoming more widely recognized today not only as the creative, imaginative expressions of culture but as being among our best clues for an understanding of the deeper movements of our age. Nicholas Berdyaev has suggested that the age on whose threshold we stand is a "new middle age." He means by this that we are currently witnessing a movement which brings man's intuitive and myth-making powers to a position of precedence. Identifying our age with the Night, he views it as one in which the role of faith and imagination is once again dominant. Among the most useful illustrative material, upon which he draws for support of his thesis, is modern poetry. Paul Tillich, in a similar vein, assigns to modern artistic manifestations a major significance in his cultural diagnosis.

What may be of even greater interest, however, for Christian scholars, is the observation made by Amos N. Wilder that, for many of our major modern poets, "the Christian faith has

again become relevant and inescapable for men initiated into the modern experience. They are now in a position to recognize that it speaks to dilemmas for which they must have an answer; it speaks to their condition."\* The resurgent myth-making powers which press us toward new world-interpretations will, undoubtedly, continue to wrestle in a renewed relation to the Christian faith and tradition. Less adequate and shallower faiths will be severely tested in this encounter. The enduring elements of the Hebrew-Christian faith will survive and be incorporated in that world-view upon which "post-modern man" will seek to base his life—a life (we may hope) permeated by a greater realism without defeat, more hope without frustration, deepened faith without dogmatism, and enlarged freedom without fear.

This direction can, however, also be expected to have implications for the reconception of Christianity itself. With the release of the creative imagination, the characteristic symbols of man's "ultimate concern" will be revitalized and reshaped. Perhaps, we may look again at the colors of the world in their primordial freshness and ordinary realities may again be filled with wonder. In this event, poetry's role will be foremost, for in it language

---

\*Amos N. Wilder, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1952), p. 259.

becomes an immediate expression of human imagination. Poetry recovers in metaphor and simile the essential character of language, which is so frequently obscured in our everyday discourse. It expresses not only the feelings and visions of man, but man as he understands himself. As George Santayana reminds us, "language is a perpetual mythology."<sup>†</sup> And, in turn, poetry itself gains in significance to the extent that man himself and his spiritual life become its central problems. If it is true that the world of art constitutes another creation, a shadow of true creation, then in poetry we have to a large extent a new "creation" of man.

However, the problem for most modern men is that their relation to the arts is primarily aesthetic. Their conception of the world on this limited, though large, basis, quite evidently, does not satisfy the needs of the human soul. Similarly, Christian faith is itself distorted from this stand point. But, in biblical faith, the tensions between the aesthetic and real existence are both heightened and resolved. Poetry, then, becomes creative in relation to faith when it expresses meaningful ethical concepts which are rooted in real human existence. Kierkegaard confessed that his *Either-Or* concerns itself chiefly with the problem of describing the "equilibrium between

the aesthetical and the ethical in the composition of Personality."<sup>\*\*</sup> But, we need to remind ourselves that much of his thought attempts to conceive of religion as "a sphere unto itself where the aesthetic relation appears again though paradoxically as higher than the ethical, [whereas] normally it is the other way about."<sup>‡</sup>

Many of the articles which follow can be viewed as centering upon a concern for the creative power of imagination in relation to both faith and thought, and in terms of which man's relation to himself finds its expression. Yet, this relation, important as it is, is not devoid of his knowledge of the world and his calling in the service of God. No knowledge can be stripped of imagination. In the sciences knowledge of the world is formulated, integrated, and re-explored. In religious faith the essential relation to God is expressed. But, in both we have a form of human existence, because both knowledge and faith express man's total determination by the Presence beyond himself. And, is it not the struggling yet wistful quest of man, written into the very fabric of our modern age, to seek out and determine that knowledge and faith which is man's real existence? Certainly nothing less can be the aim of higher education.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Soren Kierkegaard, *Collected Works* (Copenhagen, 1901), Vol. II, p. 131.

<sup>‡</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. the *Journals*, translated by A. Dru, no. 887.

<sup>†</sup> George Santayana, *Reason in Art* (New York, 1928), p. 83.

# Toward A Biblical Theology of Education

WILL HERBERG

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. *Purpose*—It is the purpose of this paper to explore the problems and possibilities of a biblical theology of education. By this is not meant either a scholarly investigation into the forms of education prevailing in so-called "biblical" times, or a theory of education concocted out of proof texts garnered from the Bible. By a "biblical theology of education" I have in mind an attempt to define the nature and meaning of education in terms congenial to the categories of biblical faith. Biblical faith is an existential relation between God and man, but precisely because it is that, it has the implications on all levels of human life—in thinking, feeling, and doing. A life of faith is a life that is lived integrally on all of these levels; to be a Christian (or a Jew) in one's "religion" but to conduct one's intellectual life and deal with the problems of thought, education, and culture in alien categories, borrowed from other sources and other faiths, is equivalent to the "stumbling" from here to there, from one god to another, that Elijah denounced on Carmel. The effort to develop a biblical theology of education is basically an effort to bring this important enterprise of the human spirit under the command, judgment, and redeeming grace of God.

2. *Definition of the problem*—The problem under consideration may be further defined as a problem of *liberal education*, since it is liberal education, as distinguished, for example, from technological and theological education, that presents particular difficulties from the biblical standpoint. We may conceive of a form of education as the institutional extension and implementation of a concrete personal life-situation. Technological education, even in its most elaborate form, is plainly the institutional extension of a father teaching his son when to sow and when to reap, or a master craftsman imparting to his apprentice the secrets of his trade; theological education is likewise the institutional extension of a life-situation, of the apostle, let us say, instructing his disciples in the faith and in ways and means of communicating it. But of what life-situation is liberal education the institutional extension and implementation? What is the situational matrix out of which it emerges? Liberal education I would define as education held to be worth while on its own account, education designed primarily not to further an extrinsic end—whether the effective manipulation of the forces of nature or the proper and effective communication of the word of God—but to bring about results somehow terminating in and intrinsic to the one being educated, the kind of education that

---

Mr. Herberg, well known on many American campuses, has lectured and written widely on theology, social philosophy, and related subjects. He is the author of *Judaism and Modern Man: An Interpretation of Jewish Religion*. For many years, he has served as educational and research consultant for a large A. F. of L. labor union. This paper was read at the "Week of Work" of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa., August 28-September 2, 1953 (evening sessions). It is the first in a series of articles, each in this same area to be published in *The Christian Scholar*. Forthcoming numbers will present other papers by such writers as J. V. Langmead Casserley and Howard Jefferson.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

(roughly and inaccurately put) aims to make one not merely a better doctor or engineer but in some sense a better human being. Both technological and theological education can easily be understood in biblical terms, because we are familiar with the life-situations out of which they grow. The same cannot be said without further ado of liberal education, and that constitutes the problem, at least in its initial form.

### II. IMAGE OF MAN AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

We might try to approach the question from another direction, keeping in mind the problem we have raised. I think it will be agreed that every major philosophy of education reflects an underlying anthropology, or "image of man," and is to be understood in its terms. At bottom, there are three basic anthropologies, each defining the *humanum*, "humanness," what it means to be a human being, in a different way. These three "images of man" may be conveniently labelled the *idealist*, the *naturalist*, and the *biblical-realist*.

1. *Idealism*—In the idealist view, man is a mind, immortal and divine, contained in a mortal and earthly body. The *humanum*, the "real" man, is the soul, or mind, or reason, and man's proper life is the contemplative life of the soul.

2. *Naturalism*—In the naturalist view, man is a special kind of organism reacting to, or interacting with, an environment. The *humanum*, the "real" man, is the total organism, and man's proper life is the reactive (or interactive) life of growth and adjustment.

3. *Biblical realism*—In the biblical-realist view, man is a dynamic agent, acting in a situation in response to the call of God which comes to him in the existential context of life. The *humanum*, the "real" man, is the total person as a willing, deciding, acting being, and man's proper life is the responsive and responsible life of action.

Each of these anthropologies has its own congenial and appropriate philosophy of liberal education. The common premise is that the purpose and end of liberal education is somehow the realization of the *humanum*, the actualization of man's "humanness," but each understands this in a very different way.

1. *Idealism*—Since man's "essence," in the idealist view, is understood as mind or reason, the actualization of his "humanness" is necessarily to be achieved through the proper exercise of this power. "Through the exercise of reason," says Ibn Sina, the distinguished Muslim philosopher, here speaking for all Greek-minded medieval thinkers, "that which is potential within the soul reaches actuality."<sup>1</sup> The proper exercise of reason is, of course, the discovery and contemplation of truth, more specifically the discovery and contemplation of eternal and intrinsic ideas, ideals, and values. Education is thus a *paideia*, a self-cultivation, designed to bring about an inner harmony of the soul under the kingship of reason. It is surely obvious how neatly this view fits in with the dominant tradition of liberal education; indeed, liberal education as we know it in the Western world grew out of the Greek-idealist view of man and has continued through the centuries to be interpreted and de-

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

veloped in basically Greek-idealist terms.

Greek, too, though somewhat earlier, is the conception of liberal education as the education of the free citizen; that also has passed into Western tradition, though it has taken many forms reflecting the changing structure of society. Such a concept commends itself to most of us, yet it should be recognized that if that is all liberal education is, its goal is obviously a civic totalitarianism, the total absorption of the individual in the *polis*, in and through which, and never outside of which, he is to realize his "humanness." "Greek rationalism," as Hajo Holborn points out, "had no organ for the free individual."<sup>2</sup> Greek thought, in fact, never achieved the concept of the *person*: man was conceived of either as a citizen, totally encompassed in the *polis* or as a discarnate mind liberated from the "flesh," whether bodily or social, and removed from all time, place, and circumstance. Both conceptions have entered in different proportions into the Greek-idealist tradition of liberal education.

2. *Naturalism*—The naturalist philosophy of education is fairly recent, although it has earlier anticipations. Since man is "essentially" an organism reacting to an environment, both natural and social, the actualization of his "humanness," in the naturalist view, is to be achieved through a proper adjustment to that environment. This adjustment is, of course, to be dynamic in view of the constantly changing relations between organism and environment, and so the goals of naturalistic education are characteristically given in such terms as "growth," "maturation," and "development." Liberal education, in this view, is designed to confer the skills and knowledges necessary for the kind of life appropriate to the very special organism known as man. The skills of social or group living rank high in contemporary naturalistic educational theory and practice.

3. *Biblical realism*—In the biblical view, man's "essence," if that term can be properly used in such a connection, is his responsive relation to God, his capacity, in freedom and decision, to hear and answer the call of God that comes to him in his situation. Man's "essence" is thus active, not contemplative; it is related to his "heart" (will, decision), rather than to his "mind": here the biblical view differs from idealism. But man's "essence" is also his freedom and therefore it is somehow nature-transcending and nature-transforming: here the biblical view differs from naturalism. Man is neither a discarnate mind nor merely an organism: he is a free, responsible person, created in the "image of God." (It might be noted that though the biblical view differs from both idealism and naturalism, it seems to be further removed from the former than from the latter, for whereas man is in some sense an organism, it is hard to see in what sense he ever is, or can be, a discarnate mind.)

The actualization of man's "humanness," which is the end or purpose of liberal education, is, in the biblical view, to be achieved through achieving a right relation to God, more concretely through loving obedience to God in responsible action in the world, which of course means in responsible action towards one's neighbor. Man actualizes the "image of God" in which he is made insofar as he loves God with all

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

his heart, with all his soul, with all his might, and his neighbor as himself, and manifests this love in action. Man's normative life as man is not the contemplation of truth or a proper adjustment to his environment; it is obedience to God through responsible concern for his neighbor. If liberal education is to have any justification at all in the biblical view, its justification can only be in terms of how it serves this end.

The problem may be posed in another way. One of the primary purposes of liberal education, in the Greek-humanist view that has become traditional in our thinking, is to free the mind of man. Man's mind is held to be enslaved by ignorance, benightedness, the tendency to take illusion for reality (recall Plato's Myth of the Cave); it is thus the purpose of education to dispel ignorance and illusion, to bring the mind to the vision of truth, and in this way to liberate it. Liberal education in the familiar sense seems particularly appropriate for this purpose. But in the biblical view, man (not his "mind" but his total self) is held to be enslaved not by ignorance but by sin; his plight is not that he is imprisoned in the shadow world of the empirical and time-bound, but that he is under the bondage of idolatrous self-will. Freedom, in this view, means breaking through the vicious circle of self-enclosed idolatry and returning to a God-centered existence. But how can liberal education in the common acceptance of the term help accomplish that?

The dilemma confronting us is now apparent: liberal education is deeply rooted in the idealist and humanist traditions; yet if it is to be affirmed by the man of biblical faith, it must somehow be brought to make sense in terms of the biblical-realist view of God, man, and the world. Is that possible? Can liberal education be grounded in the categories of biblical faith and justified in their terms?

The Bible itself knows nothing, or virtually nothing, of liberal education in our meaning of the term. The early Church, like the rabbis of the time, showed little understanding of, or concern for it; their concern was with the revealed word of God for salvation. As the Jews and Christians, particularly the latter, came into contact with the Greeks and Greek culture, a variety of attitudes emerged, which H. Richard Niebuhr has so brilliantly analyzed in his *Christ and Culture*. They either rejected Greek wisdom—much later, Yehudah ha-Levi warned in true Tertullianesque spirit: "Be not seduced by the wisdom of the Greeks; it bears flowers but no fruit"<sup>8</sup>—or else they tried to appropriate it under the slogan of "spoiling the Egyptians." But here too a difference developed: some were desirous of appropriating Greek learning for the help it would give them in understanding the Scriptures (here it was primarily philological and to some degree scientific knowledge that was involved), while others more and more fell into the Greek-idealist ways of thinking and therefore began to value Greek learning on its own account as in itself a veritable revelation of the divine. The latter view prevailed and became the basis of medieval culture, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim alike. It was at this time that liberal education as we know it began to emerge and become institutionalized. The Reformers rejected the "medieval synthesis" and tended to return to an earlier view. Luther

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

defended humanistic studies for their utility in understanding Scripture, and so did Calvin, despite his own earlier absorption in classical studies. But Zwingli was much more outspokenly humanistic in the Renaissance sense, and with the second generation, of whom Melancthon is perhaps the finest example, the Greek-humanistic ideal of education prevailed once more. In the eighteenth century, this was further de-Christianized by being remodelled along secular lines; towards the end of the century and through the next liberal education, though still basically classical-humanist, had to accommodate itself to the all-conquering sweep of the physical sciences; what emerged was the "arts and science" curriculum more or less as we know it today. All through, until well into the twentieth century, the philosophy of education remained Greek-idealist; only in the past few decades did naturalism arise with a rival doctrine and practise. At no point, however, as far as I have been able to learn, was there any attempt made to examine and evaluate the tradition of liberal education from the point of view of biblical faith, which after all was always taken as normative in Judaism and Christianity. Christians and Jews, insofar as they were interested in liberal education at all, thought of it in the familiar rationalist and idealist terms and quite as a matter of course refrained from any attempt to bring it into harmony with the presuppositions of their faith. Reflecting the duality of the Western heritage, they lived in two spiritual worlds—biblical-Hebraic in religion, Greek-idealist in thought, education, and culture. And so it is, by and large, today, except that the biblical-Hebraic element has grown even weaker and more unfamiliar.

From the point of view of the man of biblical faith, this dualism must appear intolerable. One cannot be said to live one's faith unless one tries to understand and deal with all aspects of life in its terms. Is this possible in the field of liberal education?

### III. LIBERAL EDUCATION IN A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

It seems to me that a fruitful approach to this question is possible along a way the relevance of which may not appear at first sight. Let us ask the question: what is the place of Job or Ecclesiastes in the Bible? The Bible, in normative Jewish-Christian faith, is primarily *Heilsgeschichte*, the history that reveals and bears witness to God's redemptive dealings with man and that therefore provides the believer with his own authentic "inner history." But neither Job nor Ecclesiastes has any part in the *Heilsgeschichte* (Proverbs and the Song of Songs pose a somewhat different, though related, problem). Ecclesiastes, Kohelet, the Preacher, is identified in the opening passage as "King in Jerusalem," but that is quite without bearing upon what follows; Job is not even an Israelite. In neither case is there a locus in *Heilsgeschichte* or any apparent function in the movement of redemptive history. Yet these books have their part, an essential part, in the Bible. Why?

Is it not because they constitute, so to speak, a vertical offshoot from the horizontal line of *Heilsgeschichte* in which man's existential predicament is considered in a Kierkegaardian "instant" as relevant to all phases of redemptive history from

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

creation and the fall to the kingdom of God? Is it not as if the movement of redemptive history were stopped for the instant for man to reflect upon his condition? There is much in the historical books, in the Psalms, and in the Prophets of the same character, but in Job and Ecclesiastes we have the human predicament presented to us in consummate existential form, with the "single one," the concrete, existing person, confronting the problems of his existence in relation to God, man, and the world. Of course, no "solutions" are offered, because "solutions," insofar as the Bible knows of them, can come only in and through the movement of redemptive history, but the problems of existence are posed in all their depth and relevance. For that reason these books belong to the Bible and have their proper place in the biblical canon as witness to one fundamental aspect of the divine-human encounter.

It cannot escape us that Job and Ecclesiastes bear a strong kinship in literary type and form—philosophical reflections, poetic drama of human destiny—to what has always been regarded as the major content of the "humanities" in liberal education. In a certain sense, they seem, at least in form, to be more Greek than biblical: Ecclesiastes reads like the reflections of a Greek philosopher of a particularly sceptical and pessimistic kind, while Job has actually been rearranged several times in the form of a Greek tragedy. Perhaps for this reason, these books may serve a mediating function in our inquiry. Keeping these books and the part they play in the Bible in mind, is it not possible for us to see liberal education, and particularly the so-called "humanities", in a new light, in a light that makes sense in biblical terms?

I would suggest that the purpose of liberal education is to give us a more profound insight into the human situation, into man's creaturely existence in the world (in his alienation from and need for God), and in this way enhance our understanding of, and sensitivity to, the condition and need of our neighbor as well as our own. History, philosophy, literature, and art may all be seen as contributing to this end, and thus to find a place in an education that sees the actualization of man's "humanity" as the achievement of a right relation to God and one's fellowmen. In this way, in short, they may find a legitimate place in a program of liberal education biblically conceived.

The study of pure science, particularly natural science, has frequently been understood, from a religious standpoint, as in effect a contemplation of the works of the Creator: "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1). We need not quarrel with this interpretation, but we must note that in the psalm referred to, the theme shifts very quickly from the praise of God's "glory" in the physical universe to ecstatic praise of God's "law," "commandments," and "judgments"; the physical universe is obviously brought in to provide a setting for God's exalted majesty in dealing with men. In Greek idealism, the contemplation of eternal and timeless truths for their own sake may be the highest bliss, but not in biblical faith, which knows no such truths and does not understand man's primary occupation to be contemplative. The study of the natural universe and its laws has its place in a program

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

of education biblically conceived, but this place is not an autonomous one, self-justified; on the contrary, it too must be related to the *humanum* in man, to his responsive and responsible relation to God and fellowman.

(It should be noted that it is not my purpose here to offer a theological interpretation of cultural creativity, whether in philosophy, science, literature, or the arts; the purpose here is more limited, an inquiry into the theological ground for making these cultural works the content or substance of liberal education).

It is possible at this point, I think, to go back to an earlier question and see what we can make of it. At the beginning of this paper, I suggested that a particular kind of education could be understood as the institutional extension and implementation of a definite life-situation. Technological and theological education we find no difficulty in relating to their situational contexts, but out of what life-situation can we say that liberal education, biblically understood, emerges? I think we have this life-situation classically described in Deuteronomy 6.20: "When your son asks you in time to come, what mean these testimonies, statutes, and ordinances, . . . then shall you say to your son . . ." What we shall say to our sons, comprehensively understood and mediated through the tradition of our culture, is the sum and substance of liberal education.

So understood, liberal education has ample room for the cultural legacy of all peoples, however remote from our own religious center, because the cultural legacy of any people is somehow relevant to an understanding of man's "humanness," but for that very reason, the literature of the biblical tradition is central. The thought and culture of the peoples of the world are of the highest value in the educational enterprise, if critically studied, but for critical study some criterion is necessary. And it seems to me obvious, from the standpoint of biblical faith, that Plato and Aeschylus are to be understood in terms of Isaiah and Job, Confucius and Marcus Aurelius in terms of Paul, rather than the reverse.

So understood, moreover, liberal education is rather *torah* than *paideia*, rather a way of God-centered orientation in the world—that is how Buber translates *torah*: *Weisung*, direction, instruction, way—than a man-centered self-culture of mind or soul. The difference is of great and far-ranging significance.

### IV. SOME IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

At this point, it might be well to sum up the differences between the three views of liberal education by tracing a number of important implications and consequences for the what, the how, and the why of education. Such an examination will, I think, show profound, though often hard to define differences at every level at which the problem is approached.

In the Greek-idealist view, truth is impersonal, abstract, universal, essentially timeless and placeless, and knowledge the intellectual apprehension of truth. The personal, where it enters, is subtly depersonalized into "idea" or "value" and the historical dehistoricized into "principle." In the naturalistic scheme, knowledge and truth are taken to be warranted assertions about matters of fact,

the personal is reduced to "reactions" and "adjustments," and the concretely historical dissolved into general "laws" and "regularities." Neither can deal adequately with the personal and the historical because neither possesses the categories for it. The content of education reflects this inadequacy: it is impersonal even where it deals with persons, it is non-temporal even where it deals with time and history. For the purposes of natural science and certain phases of philosophy, this abstract, impersonal, and unhistorical approach is no doubt essential, but no real understanding of human existence seems to me possible in its terms.

As against both idealism and naturalism, the biblical approach sees truth in its profoundest sense as incarnated in persons and events, and knowledge therefore as existential insight that emerges in personal "meeting" or encounter. This is at the heart of the "scandal of particularity" with which all authentic biblical thinking is affected. The great problem of education in the biblical sense is how to communicate truth which is concrete, particular, personal, and historical in conceptualizing language and categories of thought. Dr. Casserley has raised and dealt with this problem most creatively in his profound work, *The Christian in Philosophy*, to which I here refer.

Education in the idealist sense is essentially intellectual contemplation and apprehension; it is therefore again objective and impersonal. The actual techniques and procedures may, and often do, involve dialogue and discussion, but there is no real personal engagement because what is to be learned is not personal or historical. In naturalistic education, learning is basically perhaps even more impersonal for it is conceived as a matter of stimulus and response, of the molding of the environment, of ongoing experimentation. In the biblical view alone is education really a matter of personal engagement and existential confrontation. Human being is held to be in its very nature dialogic; it emerges only in a responsive I-Thou relation, first with God and then with fellowman. Human being is also historical; its very texture and substance is activity in time. It follows, therefore, that knowledge that really touches the *humanum*, the "humanness" of man, can be properly communicated not through the abstract concept but through the living word and deed, and that means personal engagement and commitment. Whether, and to what degree, that is possible in a highly institutionalized educational process constitutes a fundamental problem. It is, however, clear that unless some sort of personal engagement and commitment is achieved, there can be no real education of "humanness" in the biblical sense.

Idealist and naturalist education is in principle autonomous, although as we shall soon see it is always lapsing into heteronomy. Man, or mankind, is thought of as essentially self-contained and self-sufficient; the *humanum* that is to be actualized through education is its own end, though frequently this *humanum* is conceived as going beyond the individual and being truly embodied in some collective or corporate form. In the biblical view, of course, this kind of human autonomy, or rather pretension to autonomy, is the root meaning of sin. In the biblical view,

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

education must be theonomous because the *humanum* of man has no real being except as centered in God; man can therefore understand himself only if he strives to understand his God-relationship, which is in fact the reality of his *humanum*. It is not that idealist education, or even naturalist education in most of its forms, "disregards" God; on the contrary, God is given his "place" but that place, however important, is something peripheral and subsidiary to man's understanding of himself (and the world). In education biblically conceived, however, God is at the center because there is no man, or even thought of man, without God. Plato's "Mathematics is the royal road to knowledge" and Pope's "The proper study of mankind is man," reflecting as they do the two sides of liberal education (pure science, the "humanities") are to be contrasted with the biblical "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Idealist and naturalist education is, each in its own way, a song of praise to man: "Glory to Man in the highest, the Maker and Master of all." Education in the biblical sense, however, is a *laus Deo*, a laudation of God and glorification of his Name. It is indeed a process of "taking captive every thought and bringing it into subjection to God" (II Cor. 10.5).

### V. HEILSGESCHICHTLICHE ORDERS AND THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

What has preceded has been, by and large, an attempt to define the place, purpose, and function of education in the order of creation, that is, in the order of things which God created and found good. It is in that sense an effort to establish the normativity of the educational enterprise. But the order in which we live is by no means the order of creation in its original rightness: it is the order of creation "spoiled," upset, perverted, transformed by sin—which is our propensity to make ourselves, our ideas, interests, and concerns, the center of the universe and to comprehend the meaning of all things in their terms, while exploiting every advantage for their aggrandizement and the establishment of our self-sufficiency against God. Sin, in this radical, comprehensive sense, enters and affects education on every level. A full analysis can hardly be attempted, but some aspects of this process may be indicated.

1. Because man, in his sinful egocentricity, finds himself at odds with God and the world, the unity of knowledge and the wholeness of truth are no longer real for him. The truth that he knows is of many kinds, by no means always concordant; the knowledge that he deals with seems possessed of some inner force of disruption: it is always flying apart, with the fragments each claiming an autonomous existence and the right to define the truth from its own standpoint and in its own terms. This seems to be the particular affliction of our "liberal" culture today, but in a real sense it is the tendency of knowledge and culture through history, though of course some periods of history are more confused and chaotic than others. To deal with this chaos of centrifugal autonomy, which beyond a certain point makes life literally unlivable, men have been perennially tempted to try to bring about cultural integration through an external and therefore heteronomous unity in which some particular idea or interest is set up as the

universal criterion of meaning and truth. As has become evident under totalitarianism, such heteronomy may mean the destruction of everything significant in culture and the conversion of the educational process into a technique of mental and spiritual *Gleichschaltung*.

We are here confronted with a really desperate dilemma. Having lost his center in God, man is always staggering back and forth between a heteronomy against which he revolts and an autonomy he cannot bear. The cultural crisis of our time is particularly revealing. Modern man fought hard and confidently to throw off the ecclesiastical-scholastic heteronomy of the later middle ages; he triumphed, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries finally established his intellectual autonomy against God and the world. But this autonomy once achieved he has found to be an intolerable burden, something beyond the power of mere flesh and blood to bear. And so he plunges frantically into new heteronomies as expressed in the totalitarian cults of our time. There seems to be no way out of the vicious circle because there is no apparent way of restoring the original wholeness of knowledge and truth. This plight is reflected not only in the institutions of education and culture, but in the soul of man itself.

The fragmentation of knowledge and the decomposition of truth have become a scandal even to the modern mind, and so there are everywhere demands for a restoration of the "unity of principle and practice" on some generally acceptable basis. But is there such a basis short of a theonomous grounding in God, which sinful man in history has never, least of all perhaps in our time, been ready to accept? Shall we try to establish this unity in terms of democracy or reason or the scientific method? However valuable these things are, they are not ultimate and the attempt to effect a unity of culture in their terms can be nothing short of idolatrous. No faithful Jew or Christian could accept a "unity of principle and practice" that is not grounded in the theonomy of biblical faith; to do so would quite literally be apostasy not essentially different from that into which Antiochus tried to force the Jews in Maccabean times or the Roman emperors the early Christian. Now as then the answer of the man of faith can only be a resolute no.

But the lack of "unity of principle and practice" is not therefore something to which we can become easily reconciled. It reflects the disruption in human thought and existence brought about by man's alienation from God. But for that very reason, it cannot and will not be finally overcome until the final redemption of all life and thought at the "end." No heteronomous unity will do; it will only, and properly, set off a new struggle for autonomy. Theonomy alone can bring unity to the human spirit and provide the *humanum* in man with a secure rootage, but theonomy is an eschatological, not an historical possibility. It is a vision, a promise, a demand; it is an ever relevant principle of criticism and judgement; but it is not something that can find enactment or fulfilment in historical institutions.

And so, in our educational enterprise as in our thinking generally, we must recognize but never accept the fragmentation of knowledge and truth. In order

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

to deal with reality at all, we develop organizing and unifying principles of thought and set up structures of intelligibility; these are the presuppositions of science and knowledge about which there has been so much discussion recently. We cannot do without them since presuppositionless thinking is impossible and some unity is necessary if anything is to be known at all. But we must never lose sight of the partial and provisional character of our presuppositions and principles or attribute to them any final and absolute validity, not even to the presuppositions and principles of our biblical *Weltanschauung* for even the biblical *Weltanschauung* is a human *Weltanschauung* and not to be simply identified with God or his truth. To hold the balance in this way between a chaotic relativism and a premature absolutism is no more easy in education and thought than it is in the field of moral action, but it is just as necessary. It means to recognize that presuppositional diversity is inescapable, something that is not always acknowledged by the secular university any more than it is by the religious-sectarian institution; but it also means to recognize that this diversity represents a disruption of the wholeness of knowledge and truth in the order of creation.

2. One aspect of the disintegration of knowledge and truth is the rupture between fact and value, leading to the notorious divorce between the *is* and the *ought*. Alienated from God and blinded by the wayward devices of his heart, man in history is no longer able to see the organic unity of being and meaning which is inherent in God's creation and which presumably shone forth in its original rightness. Idealism, ignoring man's fallen state, pretends to reestablish this connection by human reason; positivism, which takes man's fallen state as normative, holds the rupture to be inherent and final in the nature of things and thus inevitably relegates meaning and value to the limbo of the unreal. We can go along with neither the one nor the other: meaning and value there must be in the creation God pronounced good, and this includes the life of man, but it is a meaning and value that no feat of human reason can extract from the facts; if it is to be known at all, it must be known as grounded in the presuppositions of our thinking, and that means ultimately in our affirmations of faith. Here again we must face the predicament and not try to escape from it through the easy but delusive devices of idealism and naturalism.

3. The predicament with which educational philosophy is confronted as a result of the "fallenness" of the historical order is reflected in the problem of the proper scope of liberal education. The humanist tradition, rooted in a certain aspect of Greek culture reinvigorated with the Renaissance, has always insisted that the proper scope of liberal education is to educate the "whole man" so as to bring about a harmonious balance of all human faculties and powers under the dominion of reason. Humanism has never sufficiently realized that while man's "essential nature" is capable of harmonious integration, his existential condition in the historical order is one of radical self-alienation and inner cleavage. Genuine inner harmony, in the view of biblical faith, can come only as a consequence of

repentance and return to a right relation with God, which in its turn is never a secure possession of sinful man and is certainly not something that can be achieved by education. The education of the "whole man," therefore, comes up against deep-seated obstacles, which humanism, because it lacks a full sense of human sinfulness, is unable to understand. Recent scientific and technological trends in education, on the other hand—trends represented in the pre-Hitler German university and its American counterpart, for example—have simply ignored the wholeness of the human person and concerned themselves only with training for scholarship and research. A biblical "philosophy" of education must understand that the education of the "whole man" is indeed the proper goal and yet at the same time never lose sight of the fact that the restoration of the wholeness of man is not a historical possibility because historical man is, in his very "nature," in a state of inner division and alienation.

4. The operations of sinful egocentricity in the life of thought and culture are perhaps best seen in the ever-present tendency to make of our culture and knowledge an instrument of spiritual self-sufficiency and an idolatrous ground of security and meaning. Science may display the "glory of God" which "the heavens declare," but can even the most pious of scientists engaged in the enterprise avoid making it a vehicle of his own pride of intellect? The old theologians understood the human heart very well when they associated the *libido sciendi*, the lust for knowledge, with other less reputable lusts. What they were saying was what Karl Jaspers meant when he recently spoke of philosophy as being "man's self-aggrandizement through thinking" and what Bertrand Russell had in mind when he gave it as his opinion that "the pursuit of knowledge is mainly actuated by the love of power." The love of power, a primary manifestation of sinful egocentricity, indeed insinuates itself into the most sublime and exalted of human enterprises: what is the philosopher's desire to "comprehend the universe" if not, at least in part, a highly sophisticated form of the urge to play the god that is found in every human breast? These considerations are not, of course, to be taken as an argument for the cessation of thinking; we are called to creative activity in all fields by our vocation under God, and besides one cannot overcome idolatry by eliminating that which tends to be idolized, or else the entire world would have to be destroyed. These arguments are rather an indication of the perilous ambiguity of our position in the world of thought as in the world of action.

5. Education may become an instrument of power and self-glorification in another and more obvious sense, in its impact on social life. Mark Twain is reported to have defined education as the defense of the older generation against the younger, and no one can deny that there is profound truth in this witticism. In all education, there is inescapably an element of domination on the part of the generation that does the educating over the generation that is being educated. The German theologian and educator, Oskar Hammelsbeck, pointed to this ambiguity in his lecture at the Conference for Christian Education held at the Ecumenical Institute

## TOWARD A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

in August 1952. "The Scylla and Charybdis of the educational problem in this respect," he said, "is that the young are not free if participation in the cultural heritage is withheld from them, while they are likewise not free if they have no protection against the culture and education forced upon them (by the older generation)." Just as it can become a weapon in the "struggle of the generations," so education can become an instrument in the social struggle. We know very well, even in our own country, the class power of culture and education. It is no solution to send everyone to college, although the movement to extend educational opportunities is certainly to be welcomed. Education and culture will always be matters of differential attainment, and men will always be prone to exploit these differences, conventionally certified, for their own advantage. This too must never be lost sight of in any overall view of education.

6. A very grave corruption that the cunning of sin introduces into education is the utilization of education itself as a way of evading responsibility. When education is depersonalized and objectified, as it more or less must be as soon as it is institutionalized whatever be the philosophy behind it, knowledge and culture become external, something to be possessed, enjoyed, utilized, rather than something that brings with it a call to commitment and decision. Sir Walter Moberly has noted that "most students go through our universities without ever having been forced to exercise their minds on the issues which are really momentous." This is not merely the fault of curriculum or teaching methods; it is, at bottom, a protective device that irresponsible man—and we are all irresponsible, insofar as we are all sinful—elaborates to externalize and objectify his knowledge and so to keep at a safe distance the call to commitment that comes to him through what he learns and knows. Students often fail to "exercise their minds on issues that are really momentous" primarily because when these issues emerge in the course of education, students—like teachers, like all of us—almost automatically and quite unconsciously devitalize them by turning them into knowledge to be learned or culture to be enjoyed, with no claim upon them or relevance to their existence. Education thus becomes, as I have said, a way of avoiding responsibility. This seems to me to be the most subtle peril to which education is exposed in this our sinful existence.

None of these underlying ambiguities and ambivalences of the educational enterprise can be taken account of, or dealt with, by the idealist and naturalist philosophies of education. Neither understands the condition of man or has any real sense of his predicament. Idealism deifies man and sets no limits to his pretensions, for it regards him as a divine spirit somehow imprisoned in an earthly body. It therefore cannot appreciate the dilemmas that confront him or the tragic situation in which he finds himself. The painful ambiguities to which I have referred are therefore regarded as merely temporary difficulties to be overcome by reason and the freedom of spirit. Naturalism, on the other hand, regards man as no more than a rather unique kind of animal—I have myself heard a distinguished educator of the naturalist school try to explain the unity of mankind in terms of

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

the possibility of crossbreeding among all varieties of men. To the naturalist, therefore, the ambiguities of existence are also merely temporary difficulties, difficulties of environmental adjustment to be overcome by scientific method, better techniques (social or biological), and continued evolution. It is significant that in both schemes man is ultimate and therefore, in effect, divine; he is not only creative, he is creator as well. In relation to such a being as this, it is of course absurd to speak of unsolvable problems or of dilemmas that cannot be resolved.

Biblical realism understands man in very different terms; it understands man in the full dimensions of his being, in his "grandeur" and his "misery" alike. It is thus able to see the full significance of man's capacity for self-transcendence and the indeterminate possibilities of his freedom without imagining for a moment that his freedom is unlimited or that his self-transcendence ever fully escapes the involvements of the self. It knows him as an animal that is more than an animal and as a spirit that is less than divine. It knows him in his creatureliness, his particularity, and his sin; it knows him for what he was created and for what he has made of himself by his wilful alienation from God. It knows him in the heights and depths of his existence. It can therefore fully appreciate the painful ambiguities to which he is exposed at every level of life, and provide him with the intellectual and spiritual resources with which to cope with these ambiguities without succumbing to the illusion that he can ever escape from them entirely in the course of his historical existence. This understanding and these resources are surely as necessary in the field of education as in every other area of life.

For in the end, in our intellectual as in our moral life, we are saved by faith and not by our works; our works, even at their best, remain inadequate and involved in ambiguity. From whatever direction we approach it, the problem of liberal education raises the "question of God": in the educational enterprise, as in every other human enterprise, there is a hidden power of theonomy. But this theonomy can find no secure lodgment in any of the structures we erect to manifest or implement it. The "question of God" is raised, but we can give no final answer either through our ideologies, our methods, or our institutions. Theonomy confronts us as a challenge and a demand, as a transcendent principle of criticism and judgment, as an eschatological promise; it is not a third option to autonomy and heteronomy, but something standing above all cultural forms and institutions as an eternal assertion of the will, judgment, and redeeming grace of God. If we submit ourselves humbly to this will, if we bow in repentance to this judgment, if we avail ourselves prayerfully of this grace, then we can with some assurance and hope face the vast and unsolvable problems of education.

### NOTES

1. Dwight M. Donaldson, *Studies in Muslim Ethics* (London, 1953), p. 109.
2. Hajo Holborn, "Greek and Modern Concepts of History," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. x, No. 1, January 1949.
3. I. Zamorah, ed., *Diwan of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi* (Tel Aviv, 1948), vol. i, p. 11.

## Poetry and the Crisis of Metaphysics

NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.



IN THE RATHER DISMAL MOMENT of contemporary history in which we live, many of us who are concerned about the fate of modern philosophy, as we have lately foreseen the ever more nearly looming shadows of the nightmare world of 1984, must surely have been led to reflect upon the possible relation between "the abolition of man" in our common life and the "refusal" of metaphysics in the academy. Indeed, I am myself becoming persuaded that there is a real connection between the two developments—a connection which must, however, be stated with considerable tact, lest those of us who discern it appear to be traditionalists who, having perhaps been worsted in academic debate by the Logical Positivists, seek to make our philosophical opponents the cause of all our present human ills. And so to construe the relation of our intellectual life to the larger community of contemporary culture would be to accord a weight to the impact of philosophical theory upon the mind of the general public that it rarely, if ever, has had. It would perhaps be more nearly true to suggest that the increasing disappearance from our public life today of honor and charity and tolerance and the other social virtues is the result, not of the unhappy influence exerted by certain types of modern philosophic scepticism, but of a profound disbelief in the power of the mind to know reality that has been pervasive throughout our period and that has shaped the outlook of those who know nothing of academic philosophy as deeply as it has the outlook of sophisticated intellectuals. This drift of our culture has, of course, in part been affected by the philosophy of the schools, but the academy has itself too been deeply affected by the ethos amidst which it has carried on its work. For it must surely be evident to those who are at all in touch with the larger patterns of contemporary dogma and ideology that the products of our teachers' colleges and our social workers and our journalists and all those whose stock in trade is ideas of some sort are people who, most of them, take it as a matter of course that in matters of religion and morals and aesthetics no radical encounter with reality, with truth, is to be had. So it is no wonder, then, that the central fact of our political life at the present time is the progressive disappearance of individual freedom and that the central fact in contemporary philosophic discussion is the "refusal" of metaphysics: for both the acceptance of the burdens of freedom and the pursuit of the metaphysical enterprise exemplify the sovereign power of the individual mind to come to terms with the real, and this is what our age has chosen to deny.

Dr. Scott is Associate Professor of the Humanities and Director of the General Education Program in the Humanities, College of Liberal Arts, Howard University, Washington, D. C. Author of *Rehearsals of Discomposure: Alienation and Reconciliation in Modern Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1952), of a recently published article entitled "Poetry, Religion, and the Modern Mind" (*The Journal of Religion*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3, July, 1953), and of other articles in such publications as *Religion in Life, Christianity and Society*, and the *Journal of Religious Thought*, Professor Scott is a Fellow of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education and a member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Christian Fellowship.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

It is in such terms, therefore, that the involvement of the fate of modern philosophy with the fate of modern civilization has, I think, to be understood. And it is this view of the matter that leads us to regard the importance of that philosophic movement which is today known as Logical Positivism (and which is, in academic circles, the most influential form that modern scepticism has taken) in terms of its being chiefly symptomatic of a deeper illness. Whatever may be done, in other words, for the rehabilitation of metaphysics may be an act in behalf of humanity. But to talk in such a way is, of course, already to have adopted the high-sounding slogans of our professional criers of public health; whereas my purpose is here to speak only in a very modest way of a particular aspect of the current philosophic problem.

### II.

It is surely one of the most astonishing characteristics of our intellectual life today that our most fashionable philosophers are joyously dancing a jig over what they declare to be the grave of philosophy. And seriously to contemplate the phenomenon is to feel that we are not far removed from the *doublethink* culture that the late George Orwell a few years ago envisaged as the ultimate tendency of our period. Though there have been, ever since the primitive relativism of the Greek Sophists, periodic outbursts of scepticism in the philosophic tradition, the tactics of the Logical Positivists represent, I believe, something quite new, for never before has the attempt been made with such radical consistency to dispose of metaphysics by the procedures of linguistic analysis. Men like Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap, A. J. Ayer, and Gilbert Ryle have asked the question that, as Professor Urban has reminded us, Kant failed to ask. In what is one of the finest and most gravely neglected texts of recent philosophical literature, *Language and Reality*, Professor Urban has suggested that "one way of stating the Kantian problem is this. Our language, made to deal with the material world, the world of phenomena, has constantly been extended for discourse about the noumenal. Kant asked the question whether knowledge in this sphere is possible. He might just as well have asked whether discourse about such objects is meaningful or intelligible."<sup>1</sup> And this is the question that contemporary philosophy has, more and more, pressed upon us.

This aggressive insurgence of an *anti-philosophia perennis* has, by certain Christian thinkers who take their cues from Karl Barth and the Theology of Crisis, been welcomed as a critical philosophy which, by demonstrating the impossibility of metaphysics, may sweep away all the proud pretensions of philosophy and propel a man into that condition of *krisis* in which alone the characteristic Christian decision can be undertaken. "But this partnership between biblical religion and critical philosophy," as Professor Langmead Casserley has said, "can only be sustained . . . so long as the target of critical philosophy is still taken to be the intellect as such . . . The moment it is seen that critical scepticism of metaphysics is at bottom critical scepti-

<sup>1</sup> Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Language and Reality* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951, Second Impression), p. 15.

## POETRY AND THE CRISIS OF METAPHYSICS

cism of speech, the partnership must instantly be dissolved. Biblical religion is as vitally concerned as speculative metaphysics to maintain the possibility of valid transcendental reference. In the face of this challenge it is impossible to vindicate the feasibility of the one without at the same time vindicating that of the other."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Casserley has, of course, touched upon the heart of the matter, for what is at issue is a definition of meaning in terms of verifiability in sense-experience which enables the Positivists to dismiss all those "sentences" of whatever sort—be they metaphysical, theological, ethical, or aesthetic—which purport to deal with a reality that is transcendent to experience. And in this connection we might put ourselves in mind of the irony involved in the fact that the three men who were perhaps in this century the last great representatives of the philosophic tradition—Samuel Alexander, Alfred North Whitehead, and Ernst Cassirer—all, for various reasons, protested against the retention of the concept of "things" as a vestigial remnant of myth thinking. Alexander preferred to speak of "point-instants," Whitehead of "occasions," and Cassirer of functional relations between symbols. And in so doing they were perhaps unaware that in a sense they were at one with the wave of the barbaric future, but they were. For whereas "Kant erected the Forms of Perception as a kind of impenetrable screen between the real world of 'things in themselves' and the mind of man," the philosophers of linguistic analysis "have substituted syntax for the forms of perception, and scrapped the things as otiose."<sup>3</sup> They hold that there is no veridical information about the world that can possibly take us beyond the human percipient. Meaningful propositions are those which refer not to realities transcendent to the percipient (for such references are, in the nature of the case, unattainable) but to immediately experienced sense contents and their relations to each other. And, as Professor Ayer has declared, "a sentence *says* nothing unless it is empirically verifiable" by reference to sense-experience, unless it is, in Kantian terminology, "synthetic." There is, of course, another kind of proposition that is admissible—namely, those which are "analytic," which are not experimentally verifiable because they put forward statements in which the predicate is really contained in the subject and which are therefore tautologous. But all other propositions are not really propositions at all.

### III.

Thus it is that there has arisen the now familiar distinction between referential and emotive discourse, between the language of denotation and the language of designation,<sup>4</sup> between "certified scientific statements" and "pseudo-statements."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> J. V. Langmead Casserley, *The Christian in Philosophy* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1949), pp. 172-173.

<sup>3</sup> Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1952, Revised Edition), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Vide Charles W. Morris, "Esthetics and the Theory of Signs," in *The Journal of Unified Science* (VIII, 1-3), pp. 131-150; and "Science, Art, and Technology," *The Kenyon Review* (I, 4), pp. 409-423.

<sup>5</sup> Vide I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticisms* (Chapter XXXIV), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952, Thirteenth Impression); and *Science and Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1926).

The kinds of propositions designated by the former term in each of the preceding pairs represent, it is argued, meaningful statements because they are analyzable into assertions about the present or future existence of sense-data. But pseudo- or emotive statements which are, by definition, those that claim to assert something more are, by that very token, meaningless.

Professor Rudolf Carnap states this positivist dichotomy in a particularly bald fashion: in his little book *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, he distinguishes between "the expressive function" and "the representative function" of language. The latter function is performed by those utterances which "represent a certain state of affairs; they tell us that something is so and so; they assert something, they predicate something, they judge something." The former function is performed by all those "conscious and unconscious movements of a person, including his linguistic utterances, [that] express something of his feelings, his present mood, his temporary or permanent dispositions to reaction, and the like."<sup>6</sup> There is a difference, he reminds us, between a man's laughing and his telling us: "I am merry now." For his "linguistic utterance *asserts* the merry mood, and therefore it is either true or false."<sup>7</sup> But the laughter merely *expresses* his mood and is therefore neither true nor false. Now expressive language (or emotive-designative-pseudo language)—the kind of language used by the metaphysician or the theologian or the poet—is, he assures us, very much like laughter: it has no representative function, it asserts nothing, it is neither true nor false because it does not put forward propositions that are empirically verifiable. It may express emotional or volitional dispositions, but it does not deal with matters of fact. And that this principle of verification is not itself empirically verifiable is something that causes Professor Carnap and his fellow-Positivists no embarrassment at all.

What I want now to remark upon, however, is the irony that engages us when we place beside each other a Carnap or an Ayer, the justice of whose *Polis* for the modern world is to be founded upon their special kind of semantic purity, and the creator of the first ideal Republic in Western philosophy. Both Plato and our modern wise men would, to be sure, banish poetry from the Just City. But they go on to declare that what he regarded as the proper language of philosophy is itself essentially akin to the language of lyrical poetry and, having no reference to reality, must therefore share the fate accorded to the abracadabra of the mantic and the incantations of the versifying bard. Our present intellectual confusions compel, in other words, the poet and the philosopher to take an interest in each other, to discriminate between their respective identities, and to discover the respects in which they may be mutually sustained by each other. And this, after a long time during which they have mutually neglected each other, is probably all to the good.

\* Rudolf Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1935), pp. 27-28.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

## POETRY AND THE CRISIS OF METAPHYSICS

### IV.

It is not, of course, the business of a poet to be a great thinker (as, indeed, until recently it had not occurred to men to suppose that the philosopher's vocation is to be a poet): it is his business to make lovely things out of words that have the potential power of purgation for natural beings. But it has been necessary to do a great deal of thinking in order to write poetry in the modern world, and many of our great poets—Valéry, Eliot, Auden—have, in the process of recovering a sense of what poetry is, come to terms with many of the central dilemmas of our period more profoundly than the philosophers. Indeed, at the moment our poets, as a class, may be wiser men than our philosophers. So it may, therefore, be appropriate for us to ask, then, what poetry has to offer philosophy in its present crisis.

The operation that the poet performs seems at first to be at a great remove from that of the philosopher. For the poet does not seek to arrive at a series of *generalizations* about experience or reality or anything at all. He does not talk, for example, about the mortality of the human creature with the funereal air of a young parson: no, Shakespeare simply says

Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Nor does he talk about the internal complications of the mind in the labored, discursive manner of the academic psychologist; no, Hopkins tells us:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap  
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
Durance deal with that steep or deep . . .

Which is to say that it is the poet's purpose to expose us to the stark irrevocability of things as they are. And "things" is the word we must use—notwithstanding the low estate to which it has fallen in modern philosophic discussion—for it is with "things" that the poetic transaction is carried on, since, as I suspect, it is in them that Being has its location. If we may borrow an excellent term from Mr. Langmead Casserley, it might be said that it is the habit of the poet to be fascinated with "the singular"—the particular event, the unrepeatable experience, the unique reality. "The texture of poetry is of actual things," says Fr. McCarron in his fine little essay *Realization*.<sup>8</sup> And we should not forget that Homer dealt with the ocean and Wordsworth with the farmland and Gerard Manley Hopkins with "the dearest freshness deep down things." And so too has the imagination of all true poets been captured by "things," by that which is *other than* the human mind. Indeed, it is "the wonder and mystery of art," as it is also of religion in the last resort, that it "is the revelation of something 'wholly other' by which the inexpressible loneliness of thinking is broken and enriched."<sup>9</sup> Poetry, characteristically, handles not universals but, rather, the individual aspects of reality. It "uncovers for us the character of particular things in the starkness and strangeness of their being what they are."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hugh McCarron, *Realization: A Philosophy of Poetry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1937), p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> H. D. Lewis, *Morals and Revelation* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951), p. 241.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

And this is why the scientist and the philosopher who conceives of philosophy as a handmaiden of science tend to view the poet with misgivings, for he remains incorrigibly devoted to the celebration of that rich complexity of the singular which always resists domestication within the abstract systems of scientific and philosophic ideas. We have long said that poetry's great gift to man is what the Greeks called *katharsis*, and it may well be that that experience involves, fundamentally, the profound relief that is to be had when we succeed in gaining such release from the prison of the mind as enables us simply to contemplate the intractable givenness of reality, as it transcends all our scientific, philosophic propositions about it and our efforts at poetic evocation of it, making its majesty known through what Hegel called the "concrete universal."

This is, then, the first benediction that poetry has it in its power to bestow upon contemporary philosophy. For if philosophic discussion is once again to have weight and significance, it must come to be in some sense discussion of that which transcends its own concepts and "sentences," namely, substantial being, which is the proper focus of metaphysical philosophy. But our present intellectual situation has made it increasingly difficult for the contemporary philosopher to keep his gaze properly focused, and so, therefore, that which he acutely stands in need of—what, in fact, the philosopher has always required—is the experience of what Professor Paul Tillich calls "the shock of being." And it is this which it is the traditional office of poetry to provide—namely, a sense of the radical otherness of reality and the surety that the human mind is capable of a more direct traffic with reality than modern phenomenism would allow. It is doubtless something of this that M. Jacques Maritain has in mind when he declares that "Poetry is ontology."<sup>21</sup>

## V.

But now the reader has probably been reminded by my adduction of Hegel's "concrete universal" a moment ago that a further enlargement of our definition is required. We have said that poetry seeks to capture the rich flavor of the radically singular, concrete, individual aspects of reality—that it deals with "things." But ever since Aristotle, it has perennially been the wisdom of the best readers of poetry to discern that, though it begins with the singular rather than the universal, it ends by somehow presenting both, by treating the singular in such a way that it becomes a glass of vision through which the universal may be seen. This is doubtless what Whitehead meant when he remarked somewhere that "Art at its highest exemplifies the metaphysical doctrine of the interweaving of absoluteness upon relativity." For the compelling power of "things" (a cow in a pasture, a boy in love, a rose, a great bridge, a plane soaring through the sky, a soldier's fright before the advance to the front) to command the poet's attention flows from the *relationships* that the things exemplify and bespeak. Indeed, the things which poetry handles, though separate and distinct, are "interacting as in a story or fragment of a story. Such action upon one another is the evidence of their interrelationship. This interrela-

<sup>21</sup>Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 87-122.

tionship is the object of poetry."<sup>12</sup> And were it not for this interrelationship *amongst* things, poetry would be impossible.

It is, in fact, the interrelationships, the clusters of analogy, *amongst* things that determine the answer to the question as to how the poet may talk about reality. To this question, certainly, the diction employed in the great line of poets in the English tradition furnishes the clear and inevitable answer. Their testimony—whether one goes to Shakespeare or Donne or Marvell or Blake or Hopkins or Yeats—is that the language of poetry is metaphor. The poet has, it seems, always known (except at times during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when he was intimidated into imitating the expository and denotative linguistic procedures of the scientist) that "a purely univocal use of language, which some modern philosophers seem to hanker after, would in fact be a very defective instrument of expression, precisely because resemblance and analogy are as characteristic of reality as its extreme diversity."<sup>13</sup>

Here, for example, are four lines—and they are among the most beautiful in English poetry—from Shakespeare's CIVth sonnet:

Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,  
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived:  
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,  
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.

The poet wants, of course, to suggest something of how, in the change that alters a human face, we perceive the passage of time. But, as the hand of the dial, in the act of recording the passage of time, cannot be seen to move, so too is it likely that the "sweet hue" of this face is in process of being destroyed: the observer is condemned to blindness and cannot be certain, for changes so subtle as those which alter a human face cannot be perceived in the moment of their occurrence. But surely only the grossest sensibility and intelligence would dare the assertion that the fearful truth that these lines convey is adequately preserved in my rough paraphrase. We are dealing here with a radical metaphor, fringed all about with ironies, that conjures up a more immediate sense of the mystery and tragedy of man's immersion in temporality than any prose statement could do. These lines form a simulacrum of reality—and a reality that is itself dramatic and analogical. They do not simply "spice up, with a superficially exciting or mystifying rhetoric, the old stale stockpot."<sup>14</sup> They rather give us an insight into the fact that in a sense "life is not life at all but is a kind of death."<sup>15</sup> And for the conveyance of this truth there is required a kind of ambiguity, a kind of irony, that may have no meaning in the world inhabited by Professor Carnap; but if that is the case, I can only be grateful that his world is not large enough for me.

<sup>12</sup> Hugh McCarron, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> J. V. Langmead Casserley, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn* (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1949), p. 195.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

## VI.

It is, indeed, at this point that we may discern a second charity that poetry may bestow upon contemporary philosophy. For not only does it confirm us in the conviction of a metempirical reality transcendent to that which is present to our consciousness; it also assures us that transcendent reality can be intelligibly talked about, if, in the speech transaction, we employ the devices of indirection. The poet's language of *metaphor* is not, of course, appropriate to the discursive mode of philosophic discourse; but, as recent writers like Austin Farrer and Dorothy Emmet and Langmead Casserley have suggested, the idea of *analogy* presents us with issues than which there are perhaps none more in need of rethinking in our day. For if present "critical scepticism of metaphysics is at bottom critical scepticism of speech,"<sup>16</sup> then, obviously, what is required is perhaps a collective effort at answering the questions which form, as Professor Urban has said, the obverse of those questions that Kant raised at the beginning of our period. They would have to do, primarily, not with the possibility of knowing transcendent reality but with the possibility of our extending language in such a way as to be enabled to carry on meaningful discourse about it. And it is at this point that, if philosophic experience were to be fecundated by poetic experience, the philosopher might be reminded of linguistic resources at his disposal, akin to those which the poet employs when he invokes the principle of metaphor, that were once understood in the tradition by philosophers who viewed metaphysics as an analogical way of thinking and that greatly need to be rediscovered today.

I have not, I should say in conclusion, wanted to suggest that there should be an ascent through poetry to metaphysics or *vice versa*. I have rather had in mind the contention that Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins has been so vigorously espousing now for almost two decades—that what is required for overcoming the cultural fragmentation of our time is the setting up of a continuous conversation between those who are custodians of the various departments of the modern mind. And I have wanted to demarcate one line that such a conversation might take between two major parties in our intellectual life today, our poets and our philosophers. It is to be hoped, however, that the new concern of which this journal is an expression may promote many other types of conversation—between philosophers and theologians, between poets and social scientists, and between the many others who are responsible for the condition of the human polity.

<sup>16</sup>J. V. Langmead Casserley, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

# The Validation of Poetry

A Comment on *Poetry and the Crisis of Metaphysics*

DOUGLAS KNIGHT



TO WRITE A BRIEF APPENDIX to Mr. Scott's article is not remotely to question its soundness of insight. I am concerned rather to indicate certain amplifications and perhaps complexities which it was not possible for him to include in so brief a piece.

Above all I should like to suggest an alternate to the frontal encounter between positivism and poetry-metaphysics which Mr. Scott develops in his opening pages. A weakness in his analysis is suggested by the sequence of thought which he implies from Kant to Whitehead to the positivists. It seems to me that in the work of Whitehead, Alexander, Cassirer, lies a fundamental and irrefutable critique of positivism—the calling into question of its basic assumption about the validity of simply conceived sense-data. All three of these men concern themselves deeply with the problem of the creative perceiving mind which the positivists have so blandly by-passed; they recognize and interpret the complexity of a universe in which any 'thing' is compounded of an observing mind and an external event.

Their insistence on the complexity of things, on the fact that as an object becomes knowable it ceases to be an object in itself, certainly puts them in opposition to the orthodox traditions of metaphysics. Mr. Scott jumps too rapidly, however, to the conclusion that because they are so opposed they must therefore be lending their covert support to positivism. One might say instead that they are resisting a major weakness in orthodox metaphysics—its monolithic, pseudo-scientific character, its assertion of abstract, generalized and yet 'true' statements about the final nature of the universe.

The metaphysics implied by Mr. Scott at the end of his paper is clearly of a different sort; he would work by analogy, which ultimately means working by symbol. Precisely this interest in symbol, however, is a great end toward which the diverse work of Cassirer, Alexander, and Whitehead points. They have moved beyond the nineteenth century in part through their conviction that ordered thought must be symbolic thought; if words pointed to things directly and simply, there would be no need of words. It is as a result possible to feel, I think, that their work suggests one fruitful way of communication between poetry and philosophy—that which, without giving up the external world, renounces the idea that simple and literal apprehensions of it can exist.

Such an attitude is not an inevitable forerunner of a barbarian wave to come. In fact that wave of scepticism, in one important aspect at least, is rather the latter-day form of nineteenth-century materialist philosophy. Its area of operation

---

This comment on the foregoing article was prepared at the Editor's request by Dr. Knight, Assistant Professor of English and Fellow of Saybrook College at Yale University. In addition to articles on subjects ranging from Homer to James Joyce, Dr. Knight is the author of *Pope and the Homeric Tradition*. He is a member of the Editorial Board of this publication. He is the president-elect of Lawrence College.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

is greatly narrowed, but Herbert Spencer's game of reducing the complex to the simple is merely carried one step farther by positivist pretenses to reduce the simple to nothing. Both positions are a far cry from the support lent by Cassirer and Whitehead to contemporary art—and, one might also add, to the complex rediscoveries of anthropology and psychiatry.

### II.

No one would deny the threat of positivism, or the legitimacy of Mr. Scott's distress at the woeful state of metaphysics. But we must not forget that the single greatest force in the liberation of contemporary art is precisely its resistance to the tyranny of 'things'—much to the distress, at times, of the reader, looker, listener. The pattern of artistic naturalism stems from a conviction that one must take over whole the world of common appearances; one can select among them, one can within narrow limits combine them in different ways, but they are what they are and every schoolboy knows what they are. The best artists of the nineteenth century fought this restriction, but they could fight it only covertly and fitfully as Dickens does in the symbolic substructure of his best novels.

The freedom of art in our century, granting all its excesses and eccentricities, is not merely a predictable swing away from the conventions of naturalism. The artist's bewildering freedom is more significantly one aspect of the bewilderment common to the physicist, the anthropologist, the psychiatrist. If the artist dares assert the validity of his symbolic constructs, therefore, he is protected in his daring by the fact that the world of common appearances as a platform on which to build thought and art has itself been swept away. At the very least, no one can claim a better right than he to build an ark.

The position of the contemporary artist is in this way an obverse to that diminution of field which art suffered in the course of the seventeenth century, and which has been so much discussed in recent criticism. Then a multiplying and expanding world of appearances was disciplined back to unimportance by the constructs of mathematical physics. Now the developments of that same physics have set free a multiform and paradoxical world—one whose appropriate symbol is the modern anatomy of light as wave, particle, or both, depending on how you come at it. The common physical world had by the end of the seventeenth century become in Descartes' sense a secondary one; now it has again become primary, unassured, therefore the fit ground for the artist.

### III.

This quality of inscrutability in our world view calls forth what one might almost call prophetic insight in our best artists, an insight founded neither on secure reason nor passionate irrationality. Instead they have addressed themselves to those problems of awareness adequate to confront the full complexity of the world, which means inevitably that they insist on non-rational insight—not that which denies the rational, but that which goes beyond and beneath it. Their

### THE VALIDATION OF POETRY

achievement is thus both a development of and an answer to the deep distrust of knowledge which marks our time.

Those of us in the universities need particularly to remind ourselves that this distrust has its valid as well as its purely brutish side, a validity rooted in our new awareness that formal knowledge is not the tool of power or progress but rather one servant of insight. Knowledge is not a god in itself; our artists have above all been prophetic in establishing a consciousness of this, in recognizing that ends of suffering and love can sanctify knowledge but that it cannot sanctify itself. It is the continuing responsibility of the contemporary artist to reveal among other things why this is so, why learning is finally valid only in the context of a living and often inscrutable world outside itself.

It is the artist, then, who has insisted most sharply that we effectively reach toward our absolutes only as we understand the ways in which we cannot attain them. Yeats' gyres and Eliot's gardens are ways of reading the world which never pretend to be blueprints for it. And any rediscovery of 'objective reality' by metaphysics must accept this same realization that it is imaginative rather than descriptive reality which counts; the 'radical encounter with truth' which we all look for (and here I must disagree with Mr. Scott) cannot be had in any sense which would allow us to say that it is directly transcendent to experience. Truth emerges instead as ultimately transcendent to any single experience, but creating that transcendence from its symbolic presence in the 'real,' the immanent world. If contemporary metaphysics will accept and explore reality in this way, it can establish itself again as the source and center of philosophy.

## Durer's Nativity

Arnold Kenseth

Durer in woodcuts black-lined in  
Two worlds and almost  
    made them one:  
Blazed heaven down on Bethlehem,  
Turreted mad Jerusalem  
Up into clouds, and hung God's graces  
In doves above his peasants' faces.  
He read the pouted lips of sin  
Even in those who praised the Son.  
So he drew Mary plain and round  
As any mother-Mary found;  
Cut barn beams, straw,  
    in blocks of wood,  
Doffed Dick the shepherd's  
    steeped hat  
In foolish love. The horned ox stood  
Watching God's poverty asleep.  
God's wisdom, then, is simply that  
The lowly may accept the deep.  
Albrecht, this meek festivity  
Under the stable's broken roof,  
Where tiered-winged angels  
    kneel in love  
And dimpled cherubs choir in rings,  
Claims us. We cannot stand aloof.  
We pray for the descending dove,  
The grace of the enfolding wings  
On this and all nativity.

---

Arnold Kenseth is a graduate of Bates College and Harvard Divinity School. He has been a teacher, Curator of the Harvard College Library Poetry Room, a university chaplain. He is presently minister of the South Congregational Church in Amherst, Massachusetts. A small volume of his poems, printed a year ago, is entitled, *A Cycle of Praise*; the above poem is from that volume, used by permission of the author.

## Science, Poetry, and Politics

ERIC LARRABEE



ONE OF THE PARADOXES of the present period is that science, while relaxing metaphysical claims, has extended social ones. It is not unusual for the modern American scientist to find himself making demands on society that would formerly have been thought unnecessary to make—for financial support, for freedom from interference, for understanding of scientific aspirations and techniques on the part of the public. In protecting his own self-interest as a scientist he is compelled to enter arenas of value judgment from which science, as a philosophy, has progressively withdrawn itself. The principles on which claims might be based are no longer, if they ever were, generally accepted; and on every hand are signs of antiscientific sentiment. Deprived of the protective devices that operate within the scientific fold, the scientist is confronted with the problem of how to conduct himself in the fields of nonscientific behavior, of which poetry and politics, one for individuals and the other for society as a whole, are two extremes.

If the need were merely for a better press, for "selling science to the people," then the AAAS could hire a competent public-relations counsel and leave the matter in qualified hands. Unfortunately it is nothing of the kind. The problem of Anti-science, though it may be a subdivision of the larger one of Anti-intellect, is not amenable to the manipulation of opinions. Palliative measures—like encouragements for more and better teaching and popularization of science—do not alter the conditions that have brought it into existence. They are, in fact, likely to be self-defeating and to alienate as often as they attract. The trouble is not too little publicity but too much, not its failure but its success. Scientists as a class, like nearly every other in contemporary America, are prone to exaggerate the degree to which they are persecuted, ignoring the existence of their own prestige in order to visualize themselves as underdogs. The vast admiration that science actually enjoys is not only more widely shared than the antipathies against it, it is partly responsible for them. At least one source of Anti-science lies in the deepening absorption of science by society, a further interpenetration of one by the other than had earlier existed. Anti-science is in many respects the friction that this process inevitably generates.

I do not mean to minimize the difficulties that scientists face, particularly since I write as an avowed generalist whose own problem is of a different, if not opposite, nature. But I write also in the conviction that they cannot be reduced without lay participation, that they involve propositions on which nonscientists have a responsibility to speak, and that science is much too important (to paraphrase Clemenceau) to be left to scientists alone. The limitations on a layman's prerogative

---

Eric Larrabee is a member of the Editorial Department of *Harper's Magazine*. This article is reprinted, by permission of both the journal and the author, from *Science* (Vol. 117, Number 3042, April 17, 1953).

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

are obvious and need neither be elaborated nor excused. This paper has no other justification than to offer scientists an outsider's view of their predicament. It is a sympathetic one, although it may not variably appear so. The writer is fully aware how precarious his position is, but would rather take his chances than apologize for it, in the belief that science will be better served by friendly criticism than it is at present by its uncritical friends. Only from the outside, in any event, can the claims that science is now making beyond its proper sphere be validated.

### II

The situation would be simpler to describe if those claims reached farther and were more vigorously engaged. "From nucleonics to sociology," writes the physiologist Ralph W. Gerard, "there exists in principle a continuum." Why stop at sociology? If there exists a definable boundary at which the orders of knowledge become qualitatively different, it must lie on the scale well beyond the region where the human personality begins overtly to intrude itself. If sociology is part of the scientific continuum, if only in principle, then so also must be the humanistic studies of behavior, which draw on poetry and politics, among other resources, for their factual evidence. Admittedly this is a wavering line of controversy, but it is the one from which science in the past quarter century has conducted a metaphysical retreat. The brave assertions of the behaviorists—like John B. Watson's "We need nothing to explain behavior but the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry"—are no longer to be heard except in faint echoes among the Social Physicists. During the same period in which science has made its longest forward strides in both performance and public esteem, it has reduced its aims and shortened its philosophical reach.

To be sure, it would be unreasonable to expect science to be permanently associated with optimism, even about itself. An increase in knowledge, as we frequently are reminded, is also an increase in ignorance. Only the innovators of scientific method like Descartes and Bacon could assume that, if it were widely and truly applied, all conceivable questions about the cosmos would be answered in from six to sixty years. Yet it is curious that scientific self-confidence should fluctuate as it does, from one generation to the next, especially in its relationship to competing and conflicting doctrines. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the rhythm of changing tensions between science and religion, which at the moment have fallen slack and seem not to be of pressing importance. No one thinks it strange that the Pope should enunciate a doctrine of creation timed to an expanding universe or that a scientist of the stature of E. U. Condon should speak of the "truths of science" and the "truths of religion" as though they were complementary. Such circumspection must be both a puzzle and a relief to mature scientists now at work who can remember the Scopes trial, or who may indeed have grown up on Andrew D. White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. Confronted with the current revival of religiosity among intellectuals, they must be tantalized by the ironical thought that science has won all the battles but lost the war.

## SCIENCE, POETRY, AND POLITICS

Obviously such is not the case. A great deal of confidence in science—as, for that matter, of science in itself—is dormant, beneath the surface, taken for granted, and no less operative because it is unobtrusive. Despairing scientists in search of a more realistic impression of what has happened should perhaps observe more closely the morale of their opponents, who are compelled to admit, like the British theologian C. S. Lewis, that the war is over and that a materialist faith is everywhere triumphant. To the Antiscientist, also thinking himself an underdog, this era seems saturated with a pragmatism of disregard of supernatural sanctions. The easy-going empiricism of everyday life, in that sense, is both an index of science's success and a potential source of its strength, however little bearing it has on scientific philosophy at a sophisticated level. The point at issue here, however, is not the score of an intangible contest between ideologies. It is apparent that in science's house are many mansions, that there are many ways of "believing" in it or not, and that its forward progress about its main business does not depend directly on the regard in which it is held. Science has at best a negative or indirect effect on numerous currents in the climate of opinion, including some that have an effect on the intellectual reputability and what might be called the "political" status of science. Yet one could fairly deduce, I think, if only from the contemporary preoccupation of scientists with proselytizing and with self-protection, that in the near future no *status quo* for science, in its nonscientific situations, can be maintained.

### III

For the purposes of the paragraphs which follow, it will be assumed that advance and retreat are the only alternative tactics and that of the two the former is preferred. Perhaps it is debatable whether science can ever serve as a universal organizing principle for those who are unable to apprehend its subtleties. Years of disciplined study, as Ernest Nagel has argued, are required for understanding the conceptions now employed at the outer edges of scientific advance. Perhaps the injunction of James B. Conant, that the uninformed public refrain from speculation of any kind about a subject (nuclear weapons, in this instance) on which essential facts must be concealed, reflects a typical pattern of divided knowledge to which we must become permanently reconciled. I should prefer not to think so, and not to accept the specialist's point of view, though it is valid in itself, without a generalist's modification. "Great scientific advances are not now," as Charles Singer writes, "nor have they ever been, of their own nature specially difficult of comprehension. . . . If those men of science be right who assume as inevitable their own unintelligibility to a public all too ready to accept this assumption, then is the outlook of our age gloomy indeed." Rather, let us assume that science has no theoretical limits, either of applicability or acceptance.

What, then, are the obstacles to advance? Many of them come quickly to mind—mistrust and resentment of a morally neutral position, of a specialist outside his specialty, of allegiance to principles above national jurisdictions, of disturbing opinions for which no individual can be held accountable, and so on.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Leaving aside those persons who oppose science for simple doctrinaire or unconsidered reasons, there is clearly a complex of many attitudes involved for the thousands of educated and rational people who, to the seeming detriment of science, continue to hold nonscientific beliefs. Since their convictions have survived as much as half a century of concerted attack, it is unlikely that they will be converted overnight, or by a television program on recent developments in marine biology. Many of them are apparently satisfied with a working allegiance to technology, rather than to science, as the fount of material welfare. If forced to choose between cumulative and noncumulative types of knowledge, many will reject the former in favor of the arts and letters that make life worth living and remain alive while science goes out of date. If science is to make any significant inroads on Anti-science in our lifetime, there are the people who must be convinced that science has music and color and poetry of its own.

I have not contrasted poetry with science in the naive belief that all scientists are by definition insensitive to poetry. Yet disparagement of intuition in any form is a part of the scientific tradition, even it is not universal or compulsory, or limited to scientists, for that matter. There is a certain thread of consistency in the response of scientists and poets to one another, from Bacon onward (how anyone, incidentally, who knew Bacon's low opinion of poetry could think he wrote the plays of Shakespeare is one of the real mysteries of nonscientific behavior). Newton was not alone among scientists in thinking poetry "a kind of ingenious nonsense," nor Blake among poets in calling science "the tree of death." Over a period of centuries, it is also a one-sided relationship, for the most part, with poets making the greater attempt to accommodate science than the other way around. They were more interested in Newton than he was in them, as in our own day T. S. Eliot has encompassed more science than science has encompassed him. While poets have struggled to preserve a place for value in a world of fact, few scientists have had to concern themselves with finding a place for fact in a world of value.

We might be better off today if more of them had. Many readers of this journal are presumably familiar with the deplorable state of isolation from its audience into which the poetic art is generally thought to have fallen. Many of them may be surprised to know, however, that several critics hold modern science responsible for this. The two most recent scholarly books on the subject—Douglas Bush's *Science and English Poetry* and Hyatt Howe Waggoner's *The Heel of Elohim: Science and Values in Modern American Poetry*—share the view that all modern poetry has been conditioned by science, even when seeming to react adversely, into avoiding clear and logical statement in favor of intentional complexity, ellipsis, and ambiguity. Mr. Waggoner puts it thus:

Now if the observational and experimental techniques of science really constitute the only valid approaches to truth . . . then it follows that poetry, if it is to seem significant, should . . . appeal to the sensibility (defined as primarily if not wholly emotional) but not to reason . . . It should, indeed it must, be this kind of poetry to be taken seriously: for we cannot take it seriously if it is only poor science (it is clearly very bad science). . . . It must be thus, then, because in a world in which a divorce has been arranged between fact and value, poetry, which

## SCIENCE, POETRY, AND POLITICS

cannot compete with science in handling the kind of facts that science handles—and these are thought to be the only *facts* there are—Poetry must keep strictly to the realm of value and leave the other realm to science.

"So much the better!" might be the reply of scientists who hold that science has no other responsibility than the untrammelled pursuit of its own ends. Yet if they choose to live and wish to be effective in a world in which poetry is also a fact, in which emotions undeniably exist and operate, then their position is untenable. Since it is little better than verbal and essentially false, the distinction between fact and value crumbles at the touch. In a strictly observational fashion, it is impossible to find values that are free of fact or facts that are free of value: the notion that one may do so is merely a convenience, and it becomes increasingly less convenient the more we suffer its arbitrary and obnoxious consequences. If science builds its future on these shifting sands it will not only build poorly, it will invite the ultimate undermining of the structure by the forces thus removed from scientific sustenance and restraint.

Science, at its own peril, may continue to treat the intuitions of which poetry is the purest product as an unrelated avenue of experience. The materials on which the poetic intuition works are no less factual because they are not statistically handled, nor is the intuitive process less accurate because it is rapid and deals with probabilities, using a mental shorthand in which intermediary steps may not be consciously performed. Intuition is commonly called upon to manage an unlimited number of variables—the connotations, say, that a given word in a given poem will have for all possible readers—and to produce an approximate answer instantaneously. Intuitive conclusions may often be wrong, but not *because* they are intuitive or because any other method could have produced better ones. I trust these words will not be misinterpreted as a request that science scuttle mathematics and experiment forthwith, to rely henceforward on hunches and inspired guesswork — though much fruitful scientific work has had an assist from the intuition in the past, and will presumably continue to enjoy its unpredictable and irreplaceable aid. Nothing need be abandoned that is now possible, nothing need be sacrificed that has proved its worth in any category, in lowering the artificial barrier that separates science from the proper studies of mankind. I do not presume that the sciences of the nonscientific which eventually result will be exact facsimiles of mid-twentieth-century models—or that they will need nothing more than "the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry"—but I do presume that they will be scientific in the best sense, in the traditional sense, which is science's only permanent legacy.

### IV

Already there is a mounting body of evidence to suggest what the outcome will be if science hesitates to extend itself and withdraws into the security of only those "facts" that can be weighed and measured, or entered in the coding devices of electronic computers. In a mass-educated society people crave enlightenment, and when they do not receive it from accredited sources, they will search

elsewhere. Much of the faddist and crank behavior that perplexes and annoys the scientific community, often giving it the sense of being surrounded by a sea of irrationality, belongs in a grouping that might be titled "vacuum phenomena." Where an admiring but overdramatized picture of psychiatry is more widely accessible than reputable treatment, the result is dianetics. Where there is a pervasive sense of inadequate diet but only sporadic efforts to improve it, the result is Gayelord Hauser. Whenever large numbers of individuals are willing to make themselves ridiculous in the face of orthodox opinion, at a cost of which they are quickly made aware, there is likely to be an element among their motives that is not ridiculous at all. Much harm was caused by the liars and mental invalids who claimed to have seen flying saucers, but much harm was also caused by scientists who persisted in offering explanations that did not explain, insisting that no others were needed, and labeling all disagreement hysterical during the six years that elapsed before Donald Menzel's sympathetic, reflective, and apparently definitive book on flying saucers was published. If he is right, then the previous "explanations" were wrong; and they harmed science in their facile assumption that all nonscientists are equally susceptible to hallucinations, and that all science was called upon to do was rap a few knuckles.

Hence a pronouncement like that of Michael Polanyi—"a society which wants to foster science must accept the authority of scientific opinion"—seems to me to be subject to considerable qualification. There can be no question of the right, nay, the obligation of scientists to decide for themselves what textbooks and journals will be published under their own auspices, what appointments will be made to their faculties and institutions of research, or to what projects their own time and effort will be devoted. Yet there seems to me to be a very large question whether this is the same thing as the acceptance of "the authority of scientific opinion" by nonscientists, or whether there is any substitute for free and open discussion on any questions that affect the entire society. The amount of money to be allocated to a National Science Foundation is just such a question, and the unhappy incident that occurred the first time it came up is highly illustrative. Among certain disrespectful nonscientists of my acquaintance, there was unseemly but understandable mirth when scientists, as a pressure group, lined up at the public trough with other pressure groups and suddenly discovered that they exerted no pressure. It was a salutary lesson.

One cannot be effective in politics while remaining above it. One cannot wield political power without accepting political responsibility, which is primarily the responsibility to respect the politics of others. I am very much afraid that ever since the threat of atomic warfare brought American scientists into politics on a large scale—and into government employ on an even larger scale—there has been a marked tendency among them to patronize the political scene, to sneer at it, and at the same time to seek to dominate it as a privileged caste. Like the poet, the politician must develop a healthy respect for facts, which are no less real because they are imponderable. He must manage a number of variables at least as large as

## SCIENCE, POETRY, AND POLITICS

the number of his constituents, and if his intuitive statistical processes for so doing do not average out successful answers, he ceases to be a politician. Here, on the other hand, is a representative sample of a "scientific" verdict on politics, taken from a symposium on cytology published by a college press:

We have to see to it that somehow future statesmen, members of the judiciary, the clergy, and other leaders of the people, the molders of public opinion, have a more "scientific" outlook than most now have. But in the meantime we scientists have also somehow got to take a larger part in the formulation of public policy than we have so far been doing. Here we run into a real problem: how to determine policies without being a politician? And how can a good scientist be a good politician? For the essence of the politician's art is to make people think as he wants them to. . . .

Anyone who wonders why science has come upon hard times politically need only read that paragraph. It is loaded with emotional assumptions that put a nonscientist's teeth on edge, and that lead nonscientists who seek to defend science into black despair. I am reminded of a physicist with whom I once discussed the "problem" of Anti-science; he said that it seemed to him perfectly natural that people should resent the scientist's superiority. There is a word for this, gentlemen, and the word is arrogance. It has nothing to do with science proper, it is not required by the needs of dedicated and impartial investigation; and it is certainly not sustainable on an evidential basis. It is an archaic prop to the ego, a social and psychological bad habit left over from the bad manners of nineteenth-century academic life, and fortunately it is already on the way out. But it is still one of the first and most unnerving aspects of science that many laymen encounter, and it has done incalculable harm.

### V

A scientist might conclude, presented with these arguments for modifying the rigid definitions that separate science from other forms of human activity, that an effort was being made by laymen to penetrate science and to take over its time-honored functions. The prospect that existing distinctions might be blurred suggests this fear to Dr. Polanyi: "It would not only become practically meaningless to describe anyone as a scientist, but even to refer to any statement as a scientific proposition. Science would become, in effect, extinct." In all respect, I cannot share the logic of this defensive orientation. The opposite danger, that science might lose the fertilizing and revivifying contributions which amateurs have always made to it, seems to me equally great if not greater. And for science to lose contact with society at large would be, of course, disastrous. Error we shall always have with us, within the sacred precincts as well as without, and a dreary record of historical failures underlines the fallacy of supposing that any one group may purify itself and live apart. Is it an abrogation of the scientist's independent judgment to rejoin the race of common folk on more workable terms of equality than now pertain?

The "mad scientist" who is so consistent a figure of modern folklore is not entirely the product of envy and ignorance. There is justice—poetic justice, if you like—in the popular view of the archetypical scientists as a warped and incomplete being, a man who has isolated one component of the universal experience and cultivated it to the exclusion of all others. Science itself, in a historical perspective,

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

has achieved its triumphs as well as its tragedies by imposing an arbitrary but significant order on the undifferentiated flux of nature. There is a sense in which science consists legitimately of distortion, in which one can say that all great scientific discoveries appear initially to be contrary to common sense, and in which the Western civilization that science has profoundly shaped now dominates the world precisely because it is neurotic. But it seems highly unlikely that this pattern of dissociation can survive the coming fifty years without serious damage to both science and society, and of the powerful corrective forces now coming into play none is more hopeful than the urge of scientists themselves toward synthesis, both of one special field of study with another and of one with all.

That is why, as a nonscientist who wishes to see science prosper, I am relatively undisturbed at the image of a world in which scientists would be indistinguishable from people, in which scientists would be men and women first and scientists second, and in which—perhaps, in ways that scientists today may find difficult to visualize—everyone else will be scientists, too. The human condition is crowded with ambiguities, and all our acts have unintended consequences. The act itself of posing the scientific dilemma in these terms will suggest to the reader countless other terms in which it might also be posed, perhaps irritating him where it ought to soothe and offering consolation where it ought to kindle wrath. These are emotional objects of dispute, charged with old quarrels and haloed with the motivations we impute to one another. They are not, in that respect, “scientific,” but I commend them to the attention of scientists, lest they be left indefinitely in other, and ultimately less sympathetic, hands.

# He Digesteth Harde Yron

AMOS N. WILDER



O MARIANNE MOORE describes one of the animals in her "aristocratic" menagerie. It may be taken as a text for Americans and especially for youth who are faced in a new way and on a new scale with the task of digesting the unexpected.

Americans hope so buoyantly and often so unwisely. Americans rebel so passionately and often with such splendid arrogance. But they are therefore so easily disenchanted and shocked when the obstacles do not "give"! And this then turns so easily to bitterness, to scape-goating, to reaction. In some ways we are all too young to take the new scale of disaster and responsibility in our stride. We have to learn the difference between grief and grievance.

## II.

We live still in the great epoch of Revolt and Emancipation which dates especially from the late eighteenth century, though this phase belongs in the wider arc defined by the Renaissance. The liberations and autonomy claimed have been associated throughout with dangers of self-sufficiency and pride. The whole constellation takes new forms in every generation. The struggle of the individual to affirm himself over against one or another kind of constraint, tradition, custom, law or conformity is a feature of the whole story of modern culture. Youth today knows it in contemporary terms.

This struggle dates especially from the Sturm und Drang in Germany, from the French Revolution and the Romantic Movement and has continued in various new engagements down to the present. It has meant the rebellion of one generation against the preceding; of the son against the father; youth against age; student against teacher. This has taken on an especially acute form in our own day.

The American phases of this pattern are especially complex and poignant. The Puritan settlements in New England had seen the imminent fulfilment of the biblical hopes in a new and undefiled theatre of mankind. "These are the times drawing on, wherein prophecies are to attain to performances . . . when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the sea." The radical empirical trait of Americans, leading to a rejection of authority, derives both from the struggle with the wilderness and the frontier, and from their version of modern revolt. Nothing is more characteristic of our spiritual tradition than the presumptuous impulse to begin again at scratch with all basic problems. So Thoreau at Walden, and so Poe in *Eurcka*, and one can add Walt Whitman and modern pragmatism.

---

This article is based upon a portion of the author's address at the First National Conference of the Faculty Christian Fellowship on June 21, 1953. Dr. Wilder is Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Chicago Theological Seminary and author of the Bross Prize Book for 1950-51, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Literature has been eloquent of this story of revolt and its costs for the last two hundred years. The literature of the Romantic Movement offers us the convulsive struggle for freedom of revolutionary man, and his consequent solitude and "loss of footing." Modern literature presents us with a new phase, the efforts of those who would break with bourgeois patterns, with modern tyrannies and stifling cultural conventions. The characteristic "heroes" are the exile, the alienated, the hunted revolutionary, the expatriate, the Wandering Jew, Odysseus. The gulf between the generations yawns more widely.

But the youth of today is not the insouciant or reckless or sardonic youth of the twenties or the thirties. It has been called the Silent Generation. Real anguish is involved in the alienation of the rebels of today. Cleavage with the home and other authorities brings uncertainty, "loss of innocence," premature traumas. Youth "on his own" at an unripe time experiences nothing less than terror in his psychological insecurity. The more so because he goes into a world, externally defined by Corregidor or Korea, and internally by the impersonality of society and the revitalization of its older norms.

This situation evidently sets new terms for the continued pattern of revolt and its consequences. How does the hereditary trait of buoyancy, the arrogant helpfulness of the stock, come to terms with these circumstances?

### III.

If one looks back over the story of modern idealistic and Romantic revolt and studies its expression in literature, one finds three disastrous courses open to those who are thwarted.

(1) The wrestle with conformity and custom may take an inflexible form involving a radical flight from society. For the artist and poet it may mean an inhuman exploration of solitude or subjectivity, ending in alienation or self-destruction. Some of the great writers of our period have in this sense been "sacrifices" of the modern dilemma, and their strange calling has been accompanied by revelatory works bearing on that dilemma.

(2) The exposed struggle with authority may involve so great an alienation that security at any price is sought. The rebel thus grasps for some substitute social bond, and we have the consequent emergence of mass-movements of an authoritarian character.

(3) The bold bid for autonomy may end in despair and capitulation. The rebel goes back to society embittered and broken. This is the pattern of too many of our youth today. At all levels of society we have the lethargic citizen, with his main-spring broken, twice baptized in conventionality.

But there is a constructive solution for the problem of the rebel who finds himself thwarted, for the generation of today which is alineated in the world of the "fathers." And this solution has a bearing in a larger sense for a buoyant America, now come of age in world-responsibilities and in sobering if not shocking reverses. This solution has its precedents in the whole long history of the struggle for emancipation of the modern age. This pattern leads through a no doubt danger-

#### HE DIGESTETH HARDE YRON

ous rejection of authority—through the bafflement and anguish of apparent failure—to an acknowledgement of the inexorable limits of our possibilities and our hopes—and acceptance of the conditions of life in an imperfect society and world, without bitterness—the acceptance of human and creaturely bonds. Such a recommitment to the realities of life, without despair but without defeat, normally takes place in the framework of religious faith and service. It has been illustrated time and again in the life course of some of the great secular “prophets” of our culture.

#### IV.

We close with an instance of this in the case of one of the classical-Romantic poets, Friedrich Hölderlin. In various ways the poets of his time and after hungered for a fuller life than their age offered. In various ways they sought self-fulfilment beyond the existing patterns and, in a sense, beyond the law. In bitter experience they were forced to come to terms with conditions of life and of their own natures. “Lebenslauf” by Hölderlin sums up the tragedy of an early Romantic who aspired limitlessly, who encountered the inflexible limits of the Promethean spirit, and who nevertheless refused to be embittered. The poem is presented in free translation. The poet addresses himself.

You, too, aspired after greater things,  
But love and its earthly bonds and the creaturely condition  
Proclaimed their ancient rights,  
And suffering bows us down with irresistible force.

The rainbow returns to the earth from which it arose,  
But it is not in vain or without meaning.

Whether we soar or fall, a divine justice presides,  
Whether in the womb of the unborn  
Or in deepest Orcus.

This I have learned.  
For you, O heavenly powers that maintain all that is,  
You, as I well know, have never led me by smoothe paths,  
As did my mortal Masters.

Let man prove all things—say the heavenly ones—  
So that he may be mightily nurtured,  
And learn to render thanks for all;  
And, whatever his own course,  
Be taught notwithstanding to hail the dawn of freedom.

## First Day, 1953

(to George Fox, Friend)

Jon Swan

Then was no hour nor is now  
For that tired thunder,  
    coughing apology,  
Its lightning dim enough to see  
    a broken cloud  
Drenching a tree with  
    appeasing rain.  
This is a precipice of time,  
    to climb a cliff,  
Not stroll some easy leaning hill  
Sloped like a dozing soul.  
    Squeezed through a needle's eye  
    Those rare appear, picked as  
    from fires,  
    So quick, white and few,  
    Or plucked, would you say?  
    some jubilant noon  
From Spring.  
For them no crucifixion after tea,  
Nor 4 o'clock ascensions into heaven,  
But God is such consuming company  
As flames to dazzled moths,  
And pain no subject mixed  
    with silver spoons.

Blessing no blur of love  
Grinning agreement from a cloud,  
Nor pillowed compliments to  
    sleep a conscience on,  
But perpendicular as choice.  
    As fresh they come as sliding  
    out of evening,  
Breathless: rebellious stars.  
As bright as leopards gliding  
    from the sun,  
As stirred fire,  
As wings that lift glistening  
Light into a dark barn.  
Friend, now is Jacob's angel,  
Wrestling for decision, gone,  
And Moses' fire, brilliant divinity,  
Paled to a preachers' tongue,  
    soft for society,  
Humble as ashes.  
While, oh, Christ's mountain radiance,  
Turned to a neon glow, flickers  
    acceptable faith,  
Suffered on Sunday,  
Punished in pews,  
Risen in weekly routine.

---

Jon Swan is a member of the staff of the American Friends Service Committee in Cambridge, Massachusetts, working with college age young people. A graduate of Oberlin College and now engaged in graduate study, he is a young poet whose work has appeared in such publications as *The American Scholar* and *The Prairie Schooner*.

## The Christian Professor and His Colleagues

T. S. K. SCOTT CRAIG



SUPPOSE THERE ARE few Christian thinkers of today with whom I have felt in more general rapport than the poet and intermittent professor, Wystan Auden. So when he told me he was writing a wicked piece on Santayana for the *New Yorker*, I scanned each succeeding issue with an interest I do not always feel. Eventually I spied the copy I wanted in the book-rack of a plane, on my way back from a faculty visit to New Orleans. So, with the spicy treasure before me, I strapped myself in, and completely ignored my neighbor in the window seat, half-hidden fortunately by a newspaper; and settled down for a treat.

In the middle of the article I came on what seemed to me a profound remark by Santayana. "Never did persons or places turn into idols for my irrational worship," and the following comment by Auden:

The natural human, or at least masculine tendency, both in love and in friendship, is to be attracted by qualities rather than persons. We like people not for what they are in themselves but because they are beautiful or rich or amusing, so if they lose their looks or their money or their wit, we lose our interest. We could probably never learn to correct this tendency, or love persons for themselves, if life did not impose on us relationships with parents, brothers and sisters, wives, children, colleagues at work, and so on, from which, whatever our emotions, we cannot escape.\*

I found this comment on human nature striking, not to say appalling; and turned to my neighbor to see if he would read the paragraph and give an off-the-cuff comment—which he did with rapidity and zest. What he said was: "Human nature just isn't that way; love of other persons 'for themselves' is not unnaturally imposed on us."

I breathed with relief—only to encounter a new problem. For my neighbor had turned out to be not only a former colleague whom I had ignored, but one very well known to the general public as an infidel! How could I, who hope and pray that I am a Christian and a Christian professor, feel as a Christian and a Christian professor more profound accord with an infidel than with one of the faithful? On the answer to such a question depends our idea of the proper relationship of the Christian professor to his non-Christian and anti-Christian colleagues. What is

---

Dr. Scott-Craig, Professor of Philosophy at Dartmouth College currently on leave of absence to serve full-time as Chairman of the Committee on Faculty Work of the Protestant Episcopal Church, presented the substance of this address at the First National Conference of the Faculty Christian Fellowship on June 21, 1953.

---

\* By W. H. Auden, *The New Yorker* (May 2, 1953); used by permission.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

it to be a man and a Christian man; what is it to be a professor and a Christian professor?

### II.

"Let Observation with extensive view  
Survey mankind from Athens to Purdue,"

from the Greek university or fellowship of researchers, teachers and pupils, to the American university or fellowship of researchers, teachers, and pupils, and we will find (I think) that the professor and his colleagues, including the Christian professor and his Christian colleagues, like mankind itself, are always and everywhere pretty much the same. For we are all men; whether male or female; researcher, teacher, or pupil; pagan, Christian, or infidel.

We are all men, that is to say (in the words of Thomas Aquinas) we all seek the preservation of our own being; we all have a bent to sexual intercourse and to the education of offspring; and very specially we all, as men, have a natural inclination to know the truth about God, to shun ignorance, and to live in society without offending others. We are all subject to the natural law, the law of human nature.

So the professor is not fundamentally different from other men, whether he be professor of pomology or of classical civilization, of civil engineering or dogmatic theology. A professor, like a dishwasher or a clerk, is simply someone who develops some potentialities at the expense of others. In his case primarily the human potentiality to shun ignorance, and in the long run the natural inclination to know the truth about God. A man is a man is a man; and not in the first place either a sinner (or a saint for that matter). You cannot repent unless you are convinced of sin; you cannot be convinced of sin unless you recognize that you have rebelled against the Creator; you cannot recognize the Creator unless you recognize your creatureliness; and you cannot recognize even the possibility of being a creature of the Creator unless as a man you come to know the range and limits of human nature, that you and I are animals but animals with a specific difference; animals, the only animals, who *know* that they do not have to be; animals that, because they know life, know also that they have to die.

If therefore the Christian—or indeed the Jew or the Moslem, the Buddhist or the Hindu—with their differing views of deliverance, destruction, and creation, have anything immediately practical to urge on their fellow men, it must be in the context of man's natural knowledge of himself, of the law of human nature, the natural law. And if this be true of all Christians, it is of special import that we as Christian professors recognize how it applies to us and to our colleagues.

### III.

Who are the friends of our Lord and ourselves on the college and university campus? Those, I would venture to say, who neither deny human nature from below nor yet from above. Those who neither reduce man to physics and chemistry or economics and sociology, in secularistic fashion; nor yet regard him as a puppet of Grace, in the neo-orthodox manner. A centrally Christian thinker, it seems to

## THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR AND HIS COLLEAGUES

me, is neither a mere Naturalist nor a sheer Supernaturalist, but a Supernatural Naturalist. He holds that man is neither wholly determined by physical and social forces, nor yet wholly "predestined" by the action of Deity. A Christian thinker and professor, subject to that Lord who is true man as well as uniquely true God, finds the friends of his Lord and of himself among all who refuse to destroy the humanity of man. And the reason that I have at the moment more Christian fellowship with the officially infidel colleague whom I met in the plane than with the officially faithful colleague whose article I was reading, is just that the former seems to know more about human nature.

Church and State, Christianity and Communism, Christianity and the Academic Life, the relation of the Christian professor to his colleagues, all of them present problems which are in principle soluble if only we recognize what it pleased God to allow the Greeks to discover and the Christians to baptize, the Natural Law.

At least, as I recall some experiences with the infidel colleague whom I mentioned before, it seems to me that an understanding of my relationship to him in natural terms enabled us to keep doors open to the Christian religion that might have been closed. He used to give, for example, a course called "Titans of Thought"; and at one time there was a curious leap, in titanic history as he taught it, from Jesus to Machiavelli. But he invited me in to talk about some of my favorite Christians, and about that titanic movement by which the Christian Platonism of Augustine was overturned by the Christian Aristotelianism of Aquinas. And I was also very touched when he asked me to read over some of his essays, where he might inadvertently have been unfair to supernaturalism, or allowed his naturalism to seem materialism.

I am proud and happy to be a citizen of the country of Thomas Jefferson, the only country in the world which has written the Natural Law into the very Declaration of its Existence, and which is thus Christianly dedicated to the preservation of life, the preservation of liberty, and the pursuit of well-being. And I am grateful to have been christened, to have been incorporated by baptism in the Church of the Divine Charity, where, through adoration of that Supernature which sought and found me, I am enabled to be as natural as possible in a world which seems bent on the impossible, on the destruction of man's understanding of man—and not least in that academic demi-monde in which you and I enact our professorial roles.

## Books and Publications

*The Christian Approach to Culture.* By Emile Cailliet. New York - Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953. 288 pages, \$3.75.



IN A FIELD so vast and important as the relation of Christianity to culture, it is necessary to take seriously Professor Cailliet's intention in this book. It is not meant as a history of how Christians have used or mis-used culture. Nor is it a history of the relation. Central to the book is a viewing of cultural manifestations through Christian eyes, a laying bare of the outlook upon life embodied in various culture manifestations.

In this enterprise he finds it necessary to exclude two alternatives — the theologism of Barth and a more or less self-contained secularism. From either perspective no meeting is even possible. Professor Cailliet's own method of exposition and understanding might well be called one of convergence, in which the Christian and the cultural understanding both exhibit that they do deal fundamentally with an identical problem. Such an approach has the obvious advantage of relating the two areas without identifying the affirmations. If there is a disadvantage, it is that the common meeting ground is not always significant. Professor Cailliet's statement that the Greek gods were at least living, lording it over the lives of men, is not, in the estimation of the present writer, a convincing case of convergence with the Christian tradition. Nor is the statement that Greek religion and philosophy before Plato have an affinity to the Hebrew prophets compellingly delineated, quite apart from whether it is finally a possible statement.

Professor Cailliet's own predilections quite naturally and legitimately color his estimates of the areas concerned. Writing on the history of primitive cultures and religions, he displays his own rich knowledge of the field but gives suggestions which to the present writer are not conclusive. Among the Greeks, the period before Plato is considered the most important and amenable for Christian scrutiny. Socrates emerges (on the basis of a particular interpretation of the Platonic dialogues) as a person who sought the clarification of the religious situation from within, not in metaphysical speculation. Plato's concern with intelligibility is the departure from a genuine concern with reality; in short, it is the "ontological deviation." Aristotle has the virtue of pushing us once more toward reality, but his concept of God is still static and his philosophical labors were subsequently destroyed by mathematics. Thus for Professor Cailliet, Augustinism and Thomism cannot finally be considered creative movements in the Christian conversation with culture. The developments in science and the Reformation started a new track. But both were side-tracked. Science lost its dynamic newness and frequently became dogmatic and shallow. The Reformation was lost by a return to a scholastic way of thinking. At last science, particularly in the cast of Einstein and Planck,

#### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

is again on a new path which Professor Cailliet thinks is significant for theology. Here again his knowledge of science is astounding to a non-professional like myself, but in spite of his erudition, I do not find it convincing. From Kant on, the point of convergence is the area of the nature of man. In Kant himself and in the immediate post-Kantian thinkers, the question for the Christian is whether an autonomous moralism can survive. In literary figures, such as Baudelaire, Hardy and Maupassant, the Christian sees frustration which must be overcome. Thus in both philosophy and literature, the problem is man.

Such, in brief compass, is how Professor Cailliet sees culture under the perspective of Christianity. It is not a history of a relation, but of a relation which might have been, or which can now be seen if one surveys the history of culture. Through it all runs the feeling that unfortunately philosophy might have developed into more fruitful channels. Professor Cailliet gives a clue as to what this tradition might have been; namely, something along the line of the "Heracleitean-Democratean perspective," reconstructed in part along the lines of Newton, Einstein, Planck, and worked out in fullest form in the contemporary work of Charles Hartshorne.

The book itself might have been more fruitful if Professor Cailliet had addressed himself to some reconstruction along this line, although I believe it is impossible. Further, it does not seem to me to be important to deal with what might have been. The history of the actual convergence of theology and culture and the problems raised thereby are more important than any theoretical survey of the past which has as its motif, what would I have said had I been there then. Such a procedure only has the luxury of hindsight. The present book, in spite of the fact that it shows that Professor Cailliet has read widely, does not come up to the standard of works already in the field by such individuals as H. Richard Niebuhr, Richard Kroner and J. V. Langmead Casserley. Moreover the book is wordy, frequently disjointed and exceedingly puzzling in its connections. Professor Cailliet is the only person I know who can make reference to a fundamentalist and John Dewey in the same sentence on the assumption that what they are discussing is somewhat identical. This is the type of convergence which only leads to confusion.

JOHN DILLENBERGER

---

*Goals of Economic Life.* By A. Dudley Ward, Editor. New York: Harper Brothers, 1953. 470-x pages, \$4.00.

This book was prepared by fifteen scholars from different social and biological sciences as well as from theology whom the National Council of the Churches of Christ brought together to study the compatibility of our economic system with Christian ethics. The National Council itself does not take any stand in this book, and any reader of the symposium can quickly see that it would indeed be hard to

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

draw any final conclusions at this stage of the debate. To some extent the essays can be characterized as attempts by economists, psychologists, anthropologists and other scholars concerned with man to indicate what their expert knowledge can contribute to make ethical judgments by Christians more meaningful. This review, written by a professional economist but amateur theologian, seeks however to concentrate on only one or two points raised by some of the essays.

It is not entirely surprising that Bennett and Niebuhr come most directly to the central point—or at least deal with the questions in which this reviewer is most interested: given the fundamental beliefs of Christian theology in regard to such important doctrines as original sin, grace and redemption, and so forth, what follows from them as to how the Christian layman should look at the world including specifically (but by no means exclusively) the economic system? Bennett and Niebuhr as theologians in the field of ethics have naturally most to say about this since they perform most nearly in their own proper surroundings. In most other authors a certain understandable hesitancy remains noticeable. They are a little like fish, if not out of water at least in strange waters, and they are at times reluctant to swim vigorously. It may be true, for example, as Professor Greene in the summary puts it, that value judgments are inescapable, meaningful, and important, but though most scientists make value judgments somewhere along the line, they are not concerned with evaluations as such.

The first section of the book on "The Role of Values in Our Economy" contains mostly contributions from economists. Professor J. M. Clark's essay on "Aims of Economic Life as seen by Economists" might be described (if he will forgive this characterization) as an essay in the history of economic thought from the Christian standpoint. Perhaps the most important conclusion he reaches—and one which finds its echo in other contributions—is that "We can no longer rely on reaching economically correct results automatically, as an unintended by-product of what individuals do in pursuit of their private interests. We still need all we can get of such automatic adjustments; but there are growingly strategic areas in which the power of organized groups is such that, if sound terms of settlement are to be reached, people must consciously intend to reach them." (p. 50) As Professor Clark himself points out, there are able and respected economists who would violently disagree with this statement. Yet this reviewer feels that they would dispute it more in words than in action. For there remains one central aspect which Professor Clark points out: The market mechanism, the most efficient mechanism known, is not the completely neutral machine so often pictured; it introduces a bias of its own. For this reason it is not always possible to accept market results as justifiable. Thus precisely those economists most enthusiastic about free markets always insist on trust busting, the break up of all monopolies and of all concentrations of power, private and governmental, etc., to create the most favorable conditions, not only to make the market work at all, but to make it work as neutrally as possible.

The central point of Professor Boulding's essay on "Economic Progress as a

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Goal of Economic Life" can be put somewhat epigrammatically thus: Progress is better than equilibrium. If progress requires income inequality, this is preferable to an income equality which would leave every one poor. Between Clark and Boulding the central problems for the Christian are already raised. These are the problems of justice and the good life, specifically of distributive justice and of economic versus other aims. Since an uneven distribution of income is not a major, and perhaps not even an important minor cause of poverty and misery, economic progress and not considerations of distributive justice seem to matter most directly in raising the physical wellbeing of people. Economically the fundamental problem posed is how to raise productivity so as to have enough to distribute. This requires at least some inequality of income.

This inequality becomes morally defensible since it leads ultimately to higher living standards which are not only good in themselves (the blessings of poverty are usually sung by those who do not feel its pinch) but make the attainment of other and higher ends possible. This is a very persuasive argument (which bears a good deal of resemblance to such diverse thinkers as J. Schumpeter or G. B. Shaw) although in some respect it postpones rather than solves the moral question of distributive justice. In a way we get the somewhat paradoxical feeling that the richer a society gets, the more tolerable inequality of incomes becomes, the less pressing a social problem it becomes, the easier it can be remedied, and the less defensible it may become morally. Yet, this reviewer may be allowed to rush in where angels fear to tread to point out, first, that Boulding's emphasis on progress and raising productivity certainly is not inconsistent with, but secondly that it does not dispose of, the problems raised by the demands of distributive justice which, in a new context, remain as important and as troublesome as ever.

We may point out that, while man does not live by bread alone, he certainly cannot live without bread, as the Bible as well as biologists and anthropologists are quick to point out. Moreover, the enjoyment of the good things of life certainly receives biblical sanction from such miracles as the miracle of water-into-wine in Cana. If Christians should not be fools who accumulate treasure for the future without regard to their fellow man or to their ultimate death—the latter being properly stressed by Niebuhr—they certainly are permitted and even encouraged to enjoy creation. Moreover, there is nothing in the biblical teachings to suggest the goodness of strictly equalitarian views; but neither can such views be derived so that each one should get paid according to his contribution to the economic pot; see the parable of the workers in the vineyard, or of the talents. We are told that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, but at the same time we are told that all things are possible with God. And we certainly are enjoined not to be envious of others. As long as everyone is tolerably well off, and no one is made worse off absolutely by an uneven income distribution (that is, if we rule out temporarily maintenance of relative income status as a relevant consideration) why should not some be better off? This, incidentally, is an accepted criterion of the so-called New Welfare Economics.

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Thirdly, however, the justice referred to in the Bible seems very much relevant here. Justice is certainly not used as we understand the term in everyday life. A just man in the eyes of God is not one who obeys the law—of which the New Testament does not seem to think overly much—but one who does not harvest the corners of his field so that the poor may have something to reap. This kind of justice, which certainly is different from both mercy and the objectionable giving of alms, seems not to have lost one bit of its relevance through an emphasis on economic progress and capital accumulation. It has to do with the fundamental belief that all things belong to God, and that we are responsible to God for what we do with them, not only for ourselves but also for our neighbors. The economic implications are many and seem most obvious. Tawney's and Max Weber's thesis about the origins of capitalism (disputed somewhat by more recent historians), have elaborated on some of them. There are examples of so-called backward countries in which an unfortunate distribution of income, coupled with a feudal legal and social framework and an unfortunate propensity of the well-to-do to invest in non-productive outlets, has missed chances for the improvement of the lot of the poor and the rich now and in the past. This is one of the reasons why other essays such as Heimann's on "Comparative Economic Systems" have not lost relevance despite the fact that economic progress has not been sufficiently emphasized before Boulding's insistence, and that its achievement undoubtedly takes the edge off many not-so-good features of any economic system.

There is another danger, against which all essays warn, namely not to take the analytic device of "economic man" too seriously. It is an analytic device which incidentally even the purest of economic theorists use rather more sparingly than is generally supposed. Knight's emphasis on freedom as against purely economic aims may serve as an example. Moreover, as there are other ends than economic satisfaction, there are also other motivations than the desire for gain to make the economic machine run. As the contributions point out, the desire to love and to be loved, but also to dominate, play everywhere a powerful role.

But, as our theologians point out, it follows from the doctrine of the fall of man that any economic system which does not take account of the selfishness of man (whether for himself or for his family), does not take into account an important aspect of Christian reality. There is the ambivalence in all Christian views of man as a creature of God—he is both good and fallen. Consequently, both centrally planned totalitarian systems and anarchy must be rejected from the Christian standpoint; the former because no man is good enough to rule absolutely, the latter because no man is innocent enough not to need rules. The dangers against which a Christian has to argue are unworkable utopias which are in conflict with Christian teachings on the nature of fallen man and the identification of what is with what ought to be, of calling a market economy good and accepting all its decisions without question, simply because the market economy works on the whole more efficiently than any other system, and may well be the only system which works at all.

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

All scientists try to avoid such value judgments, and, it seems to this reviewer, rightly so. Yet almost all contributors to this volume stress the fact that it is not possible to do without evaluations. For the economist, it is perhaps fortunate that those needed for his work are so exceedingly simple as not to deserve the name of a philosophy: for example, it is better that people are fed than that they are hungry, that they are free rather than slaves, that they are usefully employed rather than unemployed. For most analyses these primitive judgments will do. But at the frontiers of action more is needed: both philosophy (or preferably to this reviewer: theology) and law. From Walton Hamilton's essay on "The Law, the Economy, and Moral Values" this reviewer has received a powerful impression of the dignity of law as a sort of gyroscope by which society is enabled to progress and to reconcile various aims, all the more so as Hamilton is far from claiming the sort of olympian neutrality for law which is something ascribed to it or to the market.

This volume should be read. It is a stimulating volume. Yet this reviewer found it also a disappointing volume. It does not seem to come to grips with such basic problems as to what extent competition for *anything* itself good or evil, nor does it adequately ask the question what the undoubted *fact* that the economy is good in so far as it works and thus prevents chaos is better than its certainly undesirable alternative, and to what extent the profit motive and what makes the economy work in general is itself subject to Christian judgment. Perhaps this disappointment was due to the fact that the reviewer looked for a sort of modern Thomas Aquinas. Perhaps no such thing is possible among Protestants; perhaps no authoritative statement of what the Church thinks of what happens daily in the economy is possible under any circumstances. The Amsterdam statement comes probably as near to an Encyclical as is possible among Protestants. Since the ultimate destiny of man does not lie on earth, it obviously cannot be expected that the Church should or could come up with a blueprint for society good now and forever, and Christians would have every reason to be suspicious of such a blueprint if it were forthcoming. Yet the book remains to be written which will work out in terms of economic theory and economic institutions what is implied by the fundamental tenets common to all Christians.

WOLFGANG F. STOLPER

---

*Christianity and the Problem of History*, by Roger Lincoln Shinn, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953. 302 pages. \$4.50.

These are years to make particularly timely any such survey of Christian thought about history as Dr. Shinn now offers us. This past fall in Pittsburgh one six-year-old, returning from his fourth day in school, startled his parents by asking at once, "Have we entered the Atomic Age, Mommy?" His question can per-

haps reassure traditionalists that the mythmakers of today have not yet wholly persuaded the young that we are entering on new heavens and a changed earth. But it can remind all of us of the extent to which the new and almost apocalyptic view of the course of human affairs is molding the minds of our time. It is obviously valuable to direct attention to the greater wisdom of accumulated Christian thought.

Dr. Shinn remarks somewhere that the writings of theologians about history often seem to come from a different world from that of the practicing historian. Being plainly familiar with contemporary discussions among historians, he chooses in his opening and closing pages to add the perspective of professional history to that of philosophy and theology. Yet to this reviewer, who happens to be an historian, these hardly seem the strongest parts of the book. What clearly absorbs the author's attention is history, "theologically understood" (p. 15). This first becomes plainly evident when Dr. Shinn offers in one paragraph (pp. 11-12) a factually accurate sketch of history—beginning with the earliest cosmic evolution, closing with the extinction of our planet, and in between consisting of a few broad statements only, to which we are invited to add endless detail if we wish. This is hardly what the historian ever means by history. On this definition of the word, to be sure, it is easy to agree with the book's introductory argument that historians, as such, can do little to answer the questions that the human race asks about history.

But if this is a conclusion a little too easily arrived at, the underlying fault probably lies with the historical fraternity itself. Historians to-day commonly underline the point that is here presented, that in historiography interpretation (or meaning) is separate from the evidence (or events, or facts), so separate indeed as to be virtually independent of the latter. What takes place is, however, rather more complex than this literary picture. The working historian's respect for his subject and his methods commonly rests on his experience that they, when scrupulously handled, compel him to revise his initial presuppositions repeatedly in the course of his work. Dedicated historians do exist, and their dedication springs from finding the significance of their data—and by implication that of human affairs at large—heightened and illuminated as they proceed. Many of the resulting features of actual historical work have a relevance to Christian attitudes; the present book hardly makes mention of these features except within a few quotations from Baron von Hügel and R. G. Collingwood. This relevance of the professional historian's findings to Christianity has recently been treated perceptively in Professor Butterfield's *Christianity and History*, which Dr. Shinn cites only in his last section and there with quotations that hardly do justice to Butterfield's exploratory suggestions. But Butterfield's has been very nearly a lone voice. Historians do still find it proper to pose publicly as fact-grubbers, if they do not frankly elect to be opinion-mongers like many others of the laity.

Dr. Shinn is on his own ground when he firmly announces some pages later: "The problem of history is the problem of the sovereignty of God, from which the meaning of history derives" (p. 45). He has by then properly chosen to start his

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

survey of Christian thinkers with Augustine, bringing out clearly the strength and breadth of Augustine's thinking on this problem. This second chapter sets the tone and the style of analysis for all that follows. The reader can feel the appropriateness, for the darkness of the Roman world's outlook in Augustine's day corresponds to the darkening perceptible to many in mid-twentieth century: both throw into relief the problem of history as Dr. Shinn would have us recognize it. Augustine's guide through the confusion of history is described as a **Christian thread of three strands**. One strand is the apocalyptic—the author apologizes that a technical vocabulary is unavoidable—the second is the ecclesiastical, and the third is the dynamic, the confidence in God's providence. These three strands are complementary, though Augustine gave them unequal emphasis and Christians since his day have varied that emphasis. Here is a style of analysis well suited to help the reader see the richness, and the unity amid diversity, of the Christian thought to be surveyed down through the years.

Of the three strands, it is the apocalyptic that receives the most effective attention. This was the strand most important to Augustine, and Dr. Shinn finds it strongly present in the modern thought to which he finally gives chief emphasis. In its basic meaning the apocalyptic faith is, to sum up his findings, an affirmation rejecting both other-worldliness and nationalistic or Epicurean this-worldliness, denying neither the intimations of God's sovereignty nor the incomprehensibility of that sovereignty, but looking forward confidently to the redemption of history itself by its Lord. Dr. Shinn warns us, however, that it is possible for the apocalyptic to destroy all sense of meaningfulness within history, and he argues initially that the remedy for this is concurrent emphasis on the third strand, God's dynamic activity in history. Would his analysis be clearer if he were more careful not to claim for the apocalyptic strand, taken by itself, what his argument attributes to the third strand? Most Christian readers should nonetheless find rewarding the consistent testimony he brings forward that at the heart of the Christian tradition down through the ages there lies a dynamic tying together of other-worldly and this-worldly concerns.

The ecclesiastical strand is probably the one that comes off least well in Dr. Shinn's survey. He finds this predominant in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, where the two other strands almost wholly lose urgency and emphasis. Luther, the third thinker examined, shows a confusing variety of incisive views, tending toward a radical apocalyptic, and most clearly transforming the ecclesiastical theme into emphasis on the living, present Kingdom of God built on Christ. Dr. Shinn does not follow up this latter observation, but on the evidence presented both at this point and on later pages, the critical reader may question whether down through the Christian tradition the ecclesiastical theme has primarily operated at all as a hope for history, in the sense of this book. May it not be that the earthly Church and the present Lordship of Christ have instead served as the interrelated hopes for individual and society at the moment, as of the believer's present? At a number of points Dr. Shinn suggests that any prime emphasis on this salvation here and

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

now is a dangerous surrender of the Christian bastions of apocalyptic and dynamic-historical faith. Yet he lays before us much evidence, from both Catholic and Protestant thinkers, that such views can be held in harmonious partnership with the other two strands of confidence.

There is much more to Dr. Shinn's survey, however, than this formal analysis. After his brief treatment of Calvin and the early sects he turns to the wide range of thinkers in the past hundred years, and here the analysis in terms of the three strands is evidently left to one side as inappropriate. Many modern influences on Christian thought have, after all, come from those who have not seen the problem of history as the problem of the sovereignty of God. Dr. Shinn effectively describes the rise of belief in progress as a triumph of secularism that inevitably obscured for many Christians the whole of that problem—even though men such as Rauschenbusch could not help recognizing it still. There is a pleasing irony in the demonstration, in the following chapter on the ideas of Marx, that a less comfortable position in this world impelled believers in the coming proletariat revolution to frame a set of beliefs strikingly equivalent to the Christian strands of confidence, at the same time that Christians were tending to cherish these less. The recognition that Marx and Engels in their later years tended also to succumb to the apparent facts of gradual progress is unfortunately only parenthetical (p. 150). But Dr. Shinn provides us with an interesting critical examination of the attempts of thinkers like John Macmurray to work out a Christian-Marxist synthesis, particularly in the years between the World Wars.

The chapter on modern Catholic interpretations of history is likewise free from preoccupation with Augustine's three strands. Perhaps partly as a result, it offers an illuminating account, in a spirit of appreciative understanding that may come as a surprise to any reader who has drawn easy conclusions from the book's previous condemnations of "sterile ecclesiasticism." The views of Baron von Hügel and Christopher Dawson, both of them men thoroughly acquainted with historical work, provide the main themes for this chapter, but many other Catholic thinkers are given effective attention.

The following chapter, "The Rediscovery of Biblical Eschatology," is structurally the climax of the book. The recent findings of New Testament scholarship here provide an appropriate background for examining the views of various modern thinkers who have been stressing the Biblical concepts of history from our author's angle—Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, and William Temple, to mention only three. This analysis does not seem much advanced by insertion of a section listing five respects—fairly obvious ones at this stage in the argument—in which the Christian conception makes connection with empirically observable history, especially when these points are summed up in the italicized statement that "History is not the solution of the human problem, but part of the problem demanding solution" (p. 201). But there is much in this chapter that readers will find rewarding, both on the views of individuals like Barth and on special problems raised by theologians

#### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

that deserve consideration by thoughtful Christians.

Readers who have not accepted Arnold Toynbee as an authentic prophet may well feel that the next chapter, devoted wholly to Toynbee's views, comes as an anticlimax. Dr. Shinn himself is critical of Toynbee, but a sentence capping his account of Toynbee's shortcomings is representative: "An empirical historian would not allow his religious convictions to affect so completely his predictions about the future destiny of the historical process" (p. 242). It is Toynbee's predictions that apparently most interest Dr. Shinn, although from personal acquaintance and close reading he has a number of more solid things to say about Toynbee. In view of the number of Christians who have become acquainted through sermons with the latter-day pronouncements of the gifted modern historian, the author's inclusion of this chapter in a prominent position is probably warranted.

The final pages of Dr. Shinn's book offer a more direct personal statement of faith on the problem of history, a statement that pulls together much that has gone before. These pages may even provoke in some readers the wish that the tone of the book were not quite so uniformly scholarly. Those of our fellows who under the blows of personal or group catastrophe have in our time really been facing in anguish this problem of history do not seem at any point to be clearly before Dr. Shinn's eyes as he writes. But the care and ability with which he reports the thinking of so many Christians who have drawn deeper faith from such experience makes his book a valuable contribution to the enrichment of faith through intellect, for this troubled generation.

PAUL L. WARD

---

*Christian Faith and Social Action.* By John A. Hutchison, Editor. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953. 246 pages. \$3.50.

Never was the problem of the relationship between Christian faith and social action posed in a more perplexing context than it is today. The present volume of essays makes a significant contribution towards an understanding of those perplexities and no one who is in search of a Christian orientation towards political problems can afford to neglect it. While there are differences of emphasis the theological and political perspective of the contributors is one that has been derived in large part from the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and in affectionate recognition of that fact this volume of essays is dedicated to him.

The contributors were originally all members of the Frontier Fellowship which began in 1930 as the Fellowship of Socialist Christians and which was incorporated in a more comprehensive organization known as Christian Action in 1951. The history of that Fellowship is succinctly described by John A. Hutchison in an introductory essay. And in a concluding chapter Professor Reinhold Niebuhr describes the modifications that took place in the original convictions of the group during the two decades of its life. Although not abandoning the social objectives which it hoped

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

to achieve the group became less and less certain that socialism was the "answer" to social injustice and more and more conscious of the morally ambiguous elements present in every social system. Recognizing both the inadequacy of secular liberalism and the daemonic element in Marxism the Frontier Fellowship sought a Biblical foundation for social action that would avoid the errors both of Modernism and of Fundamentalism. The present volume of essays seeks to delineate those Biblical foundations and to provide a perspective from which sound political action can be launched.

It is impossible within the confines of a review to summarize the arguments of each of the contributors but a list of those writing for the volume will indicate the high calibre of the thought to be encountered there. The contributors include Paul Tillich, Paul Lehmann, John C. Bennett, Liston Pope, Reinhold Niebuhr, Eduard Heimann, Alexander Miller, Vernon Holloway, Roger Shinn, Charles Kean, Clifford Stanley, Will Herberg and John Hutchison. In an essay entitled "The Person in a Technical Society" Paul Tillich makes a number of significant observations about the de-humanization of man in a technical society. Among other things, he says: "Western technical society has produced methods of adjusting persons to its demands in production and consumption which are less brutal, but in the long run, more effective than totalitarian suppression. They depersonalize not by commanding but by providing, providing, namely, what makes individual creativity superfluous." John C. Bennett discusses in his usual lucid manner the role of the Church in the present conflict between East and West and Paul Lehmann emphasizes the central place which forgiveness and reconciliation must have in any Christian action. Roger Shinn contrasts the Biblical view of history with secular philosophies, Will Herberg discusses the relationship between faith and learning, and Alexander Miller contributes an interesting essay on the meaning of vocation. In a concluding chapter Liston Pope argues that while there is no basis "for the hope that *all* social problems will ultimately be solved . . . there are adequate grounds for the belief that particular social problems can be solved once and for all."

It is difficult to say what the "political philosophy" is that emerges from these essays taken collectively. Essentially it appears to be a kind of political pragmatism, different in inspiration but not in practice, from secular-minded pragmatism. It is questionable whether there is a political *philosophy* here at all. Indeed such a thing seems to be ruled out by virtue of the presuppositions from which most of the contributors begin. In practical matters the political thought of the contributors closely resembles that of the New and Fair Deal Democrats. The question of the adequacy of the political thought represented by these essays is in part a question of the adequacy of the theological position of Reinhold Niebuhr but this is not the place to argue that. Professor Niebuhr himself poses an important question when he says: "The love which is the final criteria is obviously a principle of criticism upon all political and economic realities, since it reveals the sinful element of self-seeking and of coercive restraint in all forms of human community. But does it help us to arrive at discriminate choices between alternative systems since

#### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

all of them have morally ambiguous elements in them?" He also says that "it is the duty of a Christian in politics to have no specific 'Christian politics'" which raises the question as to what the essays in this volume are all about. The fact that all political and social systems have morally ambiguous elements in them certainly does not mean that all systems are equally immoral or equally ambiguous.

If, as Niebuhr declares, "no political decision can be reached in terms of merely broad principles, whether of 'freedom' or 'justice'" one wonders if the "law of love" which he would substitute is any less broad or any less susceptible to perversion than the law of justice. As one encounters . . . throughout the volume the frequent criticism of political "idealism" and of "political moralism" one wonders how such criticism differs essentially from what in another context would be called cynicism. That love and justice or love and morality are somehow opposed to one another or incompatible with one another may be neo-orthodox but it is certainly not orthodox. And if one insists upon a Biblical text there is no better one than Matthew 5:17-20.

But whether one agrees with the general position of these writers or not he will find much that is helpful in understanding our present predicament.

John H. Hallowell

---

*Community Welfare Organization.* By Herbert Hewitt Stroup. New York Harper & Brothers, 1952. xi-612 pp. \$6.00.

To socially-minded Christians, the subject of community welfare organization ought to be, if it is not, important. Here it is that the Christian is directly confronted with the necessity, indeed, with the privilege, of finding ways to cooperate with his non-Christian and secularist friends in the achievement of objectives which, for whatever illogical or inadequate reasons, they happen to share. And the Christian, living in an un-Christian world, must be concerned with tactics. Community welfare organization is, therefore, a subject of vital relevance.

In this book, Professor Stroup has sought to interpret this area of our society from the standpoint of the social sciences. As he puts it, he has attempted "to orient community welfare organization within the broad framework of the social sciences," and further "to develop an analytic typology by which community welfare organization may be fruitfully studied and to formulate . . . dependable concepts by which it may be conceived."

In both of these important objectives, Professor Stroup has, I think, succeeded. His wide acquaintance with the data of sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history, as they bear upon his subject, is apparent. In the development of his typology, he has brought order into the confusing welter of ideas, activities, processes, and structures which are the result of the increasing institutionalization and professionalization of social work and community welfare organization.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Of particular interest are Professor Stroup's explicit statements regarding the influence of the social worker's social theories upon his practical activities in the field, and his recognition of the importance of values in social life, as these affect community organization and social action on behalf of "better" communities. "The practical wisdom of the community welfare worker," he says, "is guided by some sense of what is ideal. The community welfare worker seeks to work toward that type of community which he (and others) believe should exist. The *ought*, therefore, is a challenge to the *is*." In this connection, Stroup examines four of the most important ideas of the "ideal" community, the Platonic, Christian, Marxian, and Democratic.

The book begins with a well-conceived summary of the nature of human communities, which includes consideration of communities ranging from the rural hamlet and neighborhood to the metropolitan region, and from the local to the international community. Here, his broad knowledge of sociology, anthropology, and history serves him well. Having put community welfare into this context, he addresses himself to the structures and processes which have organized this area: *coordination* of welfare activities (because no social work agency is presumed to be an end in itself); *financing* of welfare activities (because we need not only good ideas about community improvement but good ideas about how to pay for them); public relations (because welfare agencies can no longer be oblivious to what various "publics" think about them); *appraising* of community needs and resources (because the welfare worker cannot afford to be ignorant of the situation in which he works); *planning* of welfare activities (because planning is necessary to relate what the welfare worker does to the needs of people); and *initiation* of welfare services (because the need for personal and social advance "is no longer only a cry of those who seek . . . elusive ideals. It is a simple requirement . . . for the continued existence of man . . .").

Inextricably involved with these structures and processes, are the human values upon which they depend, and without which they could not exist. Stroup's recognition of this comes out at several points. For instance, in the determination of what a community's needs are, it is suggested that we require first a definition of what a need is. The definition of needs is fundamentally a question of the values men hold. What, for instance, are the universal rights to which all men by virtue of being men, are entitled? Do these rights include the right to a certain standard of living, as the rise of the so-called welfare state would imply? Answers to questions of this kind are necessarily crucial to the whole enterprise of community welfare organization.

Social theories and social values are, moreover, important in determining the way in which the community welfare worker pursues his job. "The philosophy of the community welfare worker," as Stroup points out, "influences the manner in which he utilizes the process of initiation for social work objectives," and that philosophy rests on "his conception of the nature of social change," and his view of "the nature of the social act." Presumably, then, it would make a difference

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

both in his procedures and in his effectiveness whether he sides with William Graham Sumner or with Lester F. Ward in the great debate over the possibility of improving societies and communities.

Finally, social values are crucial in the consideration of the necessity and possibility of planning. Here Stroup contrasts the views of Hayek with those of Mannheim. But beyond this he points out that the heart of the problem is that "planning apparently can be effectually related to almost any sort of ultimate values. In modern societies the values of the nation have usually determined the goals of planning." If this is true, it would seem ultimately to place the community welfare worker right in the heart of the debate over whether the American way of life is best represented by Senator McCarthy or Elmer Davis, Congressman Velde or Bishop Oxnam, Congressman Kearns or Bernard DeVoto. Presumably, the community welfare worker cannot operate in a cultural environment consisting of values not conducive to the projection of free and democratic planning for communities. And certainly, the social worker or community welfare worker will not have any function, unless the social values of a community encompass the possibility that there are individual and group needs, which if they are not being met, ought to be met. "Problems cannot be recognized except against a backdrop of social values. Unless a community cherishes particular advantages it has no means of judging its failures." It would not, one might add, be able to admit that it *has* any failures.

In modern communities, there is, Stroup tells us, a considerable evidence of a studied lack of interest in any and all supreme values, which has helped to produce what Mannheim has called the "crisis in valuation." In a mass society, men have learned to be indifferent, as a means of hiding their feelings of helplessness and frustration. Such a situation is bound to influence the situation and the objectives of the community welfare worker.

In short, Professor Stroup's book is not just another dull manual for professional workers. It is a deliberate and well-planned attempt to interpret an important area of life in modern industrial societies in the broad perspective of the social sciences. In the main, the book has succeeded, and it certainly should provide a useful tool both for professional workers in the field and for those laymen who just want to know what goes on here.

Oliver R. Whitley

---

*Brother to Dragons: A Tale in Verse and Voices.* By Robert Penn Warren. New York: Dandom House, 1953. 216 pages and notes, \$3.50.

This is a book-length narrative poem by the author of the well-known novel, *ALL THE KING'S MEN*, which dealt with an approximation to dictatorship in one of our southern states, also of *NIGHT RIDER* which likewise presented

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

a social theme, and other novels and poems. Mr. Warren, after graduation from Vanderbilt University and a Rhodes scholarship has taught at Louisiana State University, the University of Minnesota and more recently at Yale.

As in his novels, a moral and philosophical concern is added to a social concern in the present work. The long narrative poem of this type is rare in our recent literature. We think of JOHN BROWN'S BODY by Stephen Vincent Benet, of Neihardt's epics dealing with the Indians, and of Jeffers' longer poems. Like the first two the present "Tale" deals with episodes and themes of our American history but in a more drastic vein and in a more "modern" poetic. We are closer here to Jeffers yet Jeffers' longer narratives lack Warren's explicit concern with social themes and social philosophy.

The poem is based upon a dark episode actually documented in history involving the family of Thomas Jefferson. Nephews of the great democrat were condemned to death in Kentucky for the butchery of a Negro slave. The atrocious character of the deed is brought into relation with the probable suicide of another relative, Meriwether Lewis, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, in such a way as to dramatize the perverse element in human life over against Jefferson's faith in man. The dialogue takes place in a kind of Limbo with Jefferson as one of the chief participants. Here the setting and circumstances of the sadistic outrage are vividly set forth, and the larger implications are discussed, with the author himself as a representative of our own disabused day and of an America that is "come of age" in all the vicissitudes of our century.

Of special interest here is Jefferson's own retrospect upon his vision of man and hopes for man as they found expression in the Declaration of Independence. He had recognized the shadows over human life but had thought of them as the "nightmares of sick children." The classic ideal of harmony and proportion that had spoken to him especially in his emotions before the Maison Carree in Nimes had seemed to promise him an order in which men would shake off their deliriums of lust and bloodshed. At first the shock of the demonic cruelty on the part of his sister's sons—for whom he had a special hope since he had no son of his own—seemed only an isolated crime. But this stain in his own blood continued to spread and to infect in his eyes the whole of human nature, so that the Jefferson of the dialogue is the most disenchanted of all the speakers. It is at this point that the most notable significance of the work appears. A wiser if disabused understanding of evil appears in the replies to Jefferson. Bernard of Clairvaux is cited: "The wicked man, even in wickedness, but seeks God." Or as it is said: "The destroyer has most need of love and therefore destroys." "Destruction's but creation gone astray." "Evil is done for good." Our pretension to innocence over against the dark blots in the world, and even our faith that man is essentially innocent, are recognized as both a kind of vanity and a mask of irresponsibility.

Fulfillment is only in the degree of recognition

Of the common lot of our kind. And that is the death of vanity,

#### BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

And that is the beginning of virtue.

The recognition of complicity is the beginning of innocence.

But the poem has many aspects of interest apart from this moral analysis. The portrayals of character, white and slave; the contrasts of life in Virginia and the frontier; the use of such psychological insights as ambivalence and anxiety; the description of the apocalyptic features of the ANNUS MIRABILIS (1811) which coincided with the date of the central crime; together with the poetic virtuosity displayed in handling such various situations: **all these combine to give stature to the work.** The power and seriousness of the whole lead us to disregard what have seemed blemishes to some. We find here an index of the profound struggle in our people today to come to terms responsibly with the shocks to our older optimism which we have encountered in these recent brutal years.

AMOS N. WILDER

---

*The Image of God in Man.* By David S. Cairns. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953. 256 pages, \$4.50.

When the Russian delegates to the United Nations opposed the declaration of human rights on the grounds that it was "reactionary" few persons disconcerted in this action a problem of theology. When students of psychology eagerly appropriate the far-reaching views of Sigmund Freud as their own criteria for understanding human behavior and dismissing religious knowledge, they believe they have transcended the need for theology. When docile churchgoers purr contentedly under the gentle homiletical stroking of a preacher who assures them of their divinity, they think they are the beneficiaries of Christian theology.

Marxists, Freudians, and the devotees of Sunday morning message are among the kinds of persons for whom this book is intended. Not that *they* will read the book, but that Christian teachers and preachers might find in it a clearer exposition of the nature of man according to Biblical and classical Christian interpretation. For it is just on the problem of human nature that the most significant intellectual struggles of our day are centered. Economists, political scientists, psychologists, poets, biochemists and theologians have here an area of thought which can be either an arena for the exchange of inimical epithets or a seminar for the sowing and reaping of edifying ideas. This book is for the latter use.

Christian anthropology is the effort to understand the nature of man in the light of the knowledge of God, who created man in His image and rescued this rebellious creature by the work of His love in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The main value of Cairns' book is, to this reviewer's mind, that he traces the interpretation of the crucial and much discussed concept of the image of God through its whole development in the Bible, the Church Fathers, and modern

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

theology, and in this study successfully avoids both the irrelevance of arid anti-quarian research and the superficiality of theorizing apart from historical sources.

Of particular value are his chapters on the meaning of "image of God" in the Old and New Testaments. He finds two distinct meanings to be distinguished in the two Testaments. The former considers the image to be the personal relationship to God the Creator, the relationship which gives man, despite his sin, pre-eminence over all other creatures, as well as responsibility to be obedient to God. Cairns agrees with Dorothy Sayers in seeing the Old Testament concept in the reply of Jesus to the question about obedience to Caesar: the coin bears Caesar's image, but you bear God's! In the New Testament, however, where the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is proclaimed, the image of God is conceived to be "a likeness to Christ, a likeness for which God has planned our being, a likeness into which we must be restored by the grace of God in Christ."

Rightly and significantly the author demonstrates the error of believing that the Bible supports two conventional and widespread views of man's nature. One might be called the "chip off the old block" view, which is also characterized by the less irreverent phrase, "spark of the divine fire." The other popular concept of the image is that of divinization, created man becoming more divine. Cairns shows how these owe their origin, not to the Bible, but to the Greek philosophical tradition and the early mystery religions. They soon became blended with the Biblical thought of the image, however, and have been taught through the centuries from Irenaeus to the present time, though with varying degrees of proximity to the Bible.

The Biblical views in tension with the philosophical have been the subject of perennial debate and have been dealt with by most great Christian thinkers. Cairns discusses the contributions of the really important men, emphasizing naturally Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, and then in greater detail the contemporary thinkers, Barth and Brunner. These are instructive chapters, regardless of the reader's readiness to agree with the author in his general support of the views formulated by Brunner in *Man in Revolt*. A careful reading will help one avoid being influenced by the caricatures of these theologians which prevail in contemporary sub-theological discussion. Many, for example, think that Calvin's thought is captured like a fly in amber when they quote him as saying: "Here is a creature (man) cursed of God which is worthy of being rejected from the rank of all other creatures, worms, lice and vermin." Though Calvin indeed wrote this, he had much also to say of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, who *died* for this same lowly creature, and by the Holy Spirit enabled him to be a responsible child of God.

The final chapters deal explicitly with the relevance of the Christian anthropology for problems raised by Marxists, Freudians, and idealists today. These are capable discussions, but one wishes that even more extensive treatment were given.

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Despite the rather cumbersome style in which the book is written, mature Christian thinkers will find much for which to be grateful in this excellent exposition of a basic problem of human life and faith.

J. ROBERT NELSON

---

## NEW MATERIALS FOR FACULTY MEMBERS

The Executive Chairman for Faculty Work of the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church (281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.), Professor T. S. K. Scott-Craig, is editor of *Faculty Notes*, a new quarterly newsletter which published its first number in October. It contains his own reports and reflections, some excellent brief reviews, and a most helpful library of tape recordings. The tapes were made of some of the courses given at the Institute of the Guild of Scholars this past summer, and of some series of lectures elsewhere. Among these are also the lectures given by Professors E. Harris Harbison and Theodore M. Greene at the first national conference of the Faculty Christian Fellowship last June. Professor Scott-Craig has also edited the *Faculty Papers*, the first issue of which appeared in early October. It is entitled *Cycles and Turning Points*, with a second paper on "A Seventeenth Century Conversation." The second set is scheduled to appear in March. These papers are designed to encourage the formation of faculty-clergy discussion groups and to be used, experimentally, as the basis of such discussions. (Individual *Papers* are priced at 25¢ per copy; the series of six at \$1.00.)

The administrative office of the Faculty Fellowship (257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.) published a "special edition" of *Memo* in early autumn which is designed to give a brief account of the nature and work of the Fellowship. It provides a view of the structure of the Fellowship and a prospectus of its plans for the coming year. Attached to it is a bibliography of the kinds of books which have been found helpful in faculty fellowships and discussion groups or which are believed to be most promising. Those who desire fuller information about the nature and earlier work of the Fellowship will want to read earlier issues of this quarterly, *The Christian Scholar*. It may be helpful to remind readers once again of our "reprint service." Believing that some of the articles published in this quarterly may serve well as "faculty papers," these are available in reprint at very nominal costs (see the "Preface" of the September number for the prices).

## A Christian View of Sex and the Kinsey Reports

Dr. Seward Hiltner, a member of the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago and widely known author of books and articles in the field of religion and mental hygiene, is the author of a recently-published book entitled, *Sex Ethics and the Kinsey Reports*, and published by Association Press. This authoritative guide to the re-thinking of what Dr. Kinsey calls the "Judeo-Christian" sex code actually comprises two books, integrated into one volume. It is a constructive Christian appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the Kinsey reports, and it is a presentation of a carefully reasoned, religion-based code of sex ethics, embodying positive elements from the Kinsey studies. Dr. Hiltner outlines in detail the evolution of Judeo-Christian sex standards from biblical times to the present, explains Dr. Kinsey's aims, methods, and relevant discoveries, examines critically Dr. Kinsey's view of religious influences, surveys current American attitudes toward sex and the Christian criticisms of these attitudes, and evaluates and applies a modern Christian view, as seen in the light of Kinsey's studies, to the problems of modern men and women.

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THE BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS SECTION

- Dr. John Dillenberger is Associate Professor of Religion at Columbia University, and of several well known books, is Professor of Political Science at Duke University.
- Dr. John H. Hallowell, author of the "Religious Perspectives" pamphlet in his field University.
- Dr. J. Robert Nelson, who until June of this year served as Study Secretary for the United Student Christian Council, is a member of the staff of the World Council of Churches in its Commission on Faith and Order.
- Dr. Wolfgang F. Stolper is Professor of Economics at the University of Michigan.
- Dr. Paul L. Ward is Professor of History and head of the Department of History at Carnegie Institute of Technology.
- Dr. Oliver Read Whitley has just joined the faculty of Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, as Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Until recently he served on the faculty of Park College.
- Dr. Amos N. Wilder is Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Chicago Theological Seminary and a member of the Federated Theological Faculties of the University of Chicago.

## Reports and Notices

### The Department of Campus Christian Life

An inclusive concern for the total Christian community and its role in the whole life of the colleges and universities provides the foundation and motivation for the newly-activated Department of Campus Christian Life. Nothing less than such an inclusive concern can, of course, be adequate to meet the contemporary crisis in higher education and its wide range of needs; nothing less can be true, moreover, to the present day rediscoveries of the Christian faith and heritage in relation to both curricular and extra-curricular life on the campuses of our country. Formed as a unit of the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., this Department seeks to bring together in the fullest possible cooperation all churches and associations which serve students and faculty members in their Christian work within the whole life of higher education. The Department seeks to meet the immense challenges and needs of providing both the ecumenical perspective and certain primary services and relationships for, and in cooperation with, the "related movements" among students and faculty members. Throughout its entire work, the Department attempts to serve both the sponsoring churches and related associations, and the "related movements," in such a way that the calling of God in American campus life may be fully heard and responsibly met.

More than a year of intensive effort has been given by a provisional committee to the development of a perspective and structure for the Department. At mid-point, this provisional committee, composed of Student Work Executives of the churches cooperating in the Council called into consultation a much larger number of persons representing directly the student movements, the Faculty Christian Fellowship, and various agencies, foundations, and organizations actively engaged in Christian work with students and faculty members, to assist in the formulation of the Department's plans and program. When additional study had been given all the suggestions made, the provisional committee formulated its "Rules of Procedure." These "Rules" provide the perspective and structure of the new Department, and for a working relationship with both the Faculty Christian Fellowship and the United Student Christian Council as its "Related Movements." Guarantees of autonomy in such areas as policy, program, and budget are made, and, in turn, the challenges for responsible action by these related movements to fulfill the purposes of the Department are set forth. At their respective meetings during the past summer, both the Faculty Christian Fellowship and the United Student Christian Council accepted the invitations extended by the Department. Thus, the Department is now a fully operating unit within the Commission

and provides a promising endeavor in the whole of Christian higher education.

"Working with its related movements, with the appropriate church boards of education, and in cooperation with all interested units of the Council and with other non-Council associations and agencies, it shall," according to the Department's Rules of Procedure, "be the function of the Department

1. "to join together the endeavors and initiatives for Christian campus life, extending and deepening the ecumenical experience for Christians in the colleges and universities ;
2. "to encourage students, faculty members, and administrators, as Christian persons and groups, to participate in worship, study, and action, so that they may grow in their understanding of the Gospel, in their skill to communicate its truth and power in the academic community, and in their continuing discipleship and service in the fellowship of their church, both locally and throughout the world ;
3. "to encourage the development of local and/or regional intercollegiate student Christian and faculty Christian movements responsive to local and regional needs, and providing for the full participation of the several types of Christian groups from the local campuses ; and,
4. "to seek the further development of responsible, related, national movements among Christian students and faculty members, as their ecumenical expressions in their respective spheres of endeavor."

The related movements are assured both "freedom of expression" under their own names, and self-determination to so constitute and organize themselves that their own genius is best expressed and their responsibilities best carried forward.

A General Committee, widely representative of all the churches, associations, and agencies which share in the Department's purposes and of the two related movements, as well as of other concerned groups and organizations, is responsible for developing and reviewing the general philosophy and program of the Department, and to elaborate policies and structural details as new needs arise. The Executive Committee, composed of its own officers and similar officers from its related movements with six additional members at large, has responsibility for the Department between meetings of the General Committee. Special committees reflecting the composition of the General Committee are responsible for such phases of the Department's work as United Campus Work Projects, Budget and Finance, and Personnel. A larger Advisory Council is provided for, so that all interested groups and local and regional staff members may join the General Committee in a total evaluation of the Department's work, and its future plans. Staff provided for the Department includes an Executive Director, Directors of the related movements, and other specialized staff; the staff of related movements are administratively responsible to the Department, while, in areas of program and policy they are responsible to their respective movements. The current staff consists of Dr.

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

J. Edward Dirks, Executive Director and acting Director for the F.C.F., and Dr. Ruth Wick, Associate Executive Director and Director of the related U.S.C.C.

While these structural details are essential to the operation of the Department, nevertheless, its living organisms are its related movements, which alone, though very different from one another, provide a full picture of the Department.

### THE UNITED STUDENT CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

In September, 1953, the United Student Christian Council in the USA voted to become the related student movement of the Department of Campus Christian Life. It enters the Department as a Council of 14 member movements: National Student Council of the Y.W.C.A., National Student Council of the Y.M.C.A., Student Volunteer Movement, Inter-seminary Movement, Lutheran Student Association of America and the student work departments of the following churches: American Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention (fraternally), Disciples of Christ, Evangelical & Reformed and Congregational-Christian (United Student Fellowship), Evangelical United Brethren, Methodist, Presbyterian U. S., Presbyterian U.S.A., Protestant Episcopal.

The United Student Christian Council, as a federation of these movements and agencies, coordinates the program among the member groups and relates them to the World's Student Christian Federation as the United States Member of the Federation. It meets annually in a General Assembly and every four

years sponsors a Quadrennial Conference, usually held at the time of the Christmas holidays. It has a number of concerns which will be briefly summarized here: It is concerned with Study in the student Christian movements in the USA and as such has had a Study Department for the past three years charged with the initiating and stimulating of a program of study in the member movements of USCC. The 1952 Quadrennials were Study Conferences, held in three areas in the United States, Maryland, Missouri and California. It has long been concerned with cooperative work on campuses and has sponsored such work through the Campus Strategy Committee which now becomes the Committee on United Campus Work Projects of the Department of Campus Christian Life. At present there are 22 Campus Strategy Projects where two or more movements are cooperating in program and support of joint staff. Ten places are at present under investigation for the initiation of a Campus Strategy Unit.

For a number of years USCC and its member movements have been concerned about cooperative work on small college campuses. For the past two years study has been carried on in all movements in regard to specific proposals for a united program on these campuses; this study by member movements will continue during the coming year. Other major concerns during the past years and continuing in 1953-54 center around the following: USCC Statement of Purpose, Political Commission, Commission on Work Among Graduate Students, World's Student Christian Federation Interpretation and Promotion in the

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

USA, and World Mission. In addition the USCC works through the following organizations which are related movements: Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, Student Volunteer Movement, World Student Service Fund, and University Christian Mission.

The United Student Christian Council was formed in 1944 as a result of several earlier provisions among member movements for cooperating in their mission and ministry on the campuses of the United States. During the period 1937-1938, the church related movements were pressing strongly for a relationship to the World's Student Christian Federation which up to this time had been held only by the Y's and the SVM. WSCF preferred to relate, as nearly as possible, only one body from the USA. Therefore in 1938 all Protestant student groups joined in a Provisional Council of the WSCF in the USA. And it was largely from this tentative WSCF group that there emerged in 1944 the United Student Christian Council.

In the nine years of its history, the USCC has been instrumental in helping to bring into closer relationship nationally all of the movements represented in it. It has been concerned also, that this cooperation and unity be expressed in it. It has been concerned, also, that and universities and has consistently worked to this end.

While still a federation of member movements, the USCC is the ecumenical expression in the student Christian world in the USA. This ecumenical concern is expressed in various ways.

It is conscious of its obligation to help students and staff grow in a consciousness of the wholeness and the universality of the Church. On a local campus it tries to implement this by helping individual students and groups enter into the reality of the whole Christian community on the campus, cutting across the lines which usually separate students, faculty and administration and those which separate them as denominational or agency expressions of the student Christian movement. It expresses this concern nationally by providing opportunities for students and staff to meet, as individuals, across the denominational expressions of the student Christian life in the USA and, as representatives of the whole fellowship of the Church and Agencies, to enter into ecumenical conversation and work within the whole life of the Church, especially through the General and other committees of the World's Student Christian Federation.

This past summer, USCC sponsored for the first time in its history, an Ecumenical Student Workers' Conference where 231 local staff from all of the member movements met together for a week of study, discussion and fellowship. In the summer of 1954, USCC will sponsor an ecumenical student conference in Evanston, Illinois, at the time of the World Council of Churches Assembly, August 14-31.

USCC now enters this new relationship with the National Council of Churches aware of the tremendous responsibility which it has to be the *student* Christian movement in the United States. It is concerned with the whole question of the university, with the

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

"vocation" of the student, with evangelism on the campus as a part of the total mission of the Church, and with the whole mission of the Church and what that means in the lives of individual students and their movements. It is concerned with the fact that it is called to be a "witnessing community" in all aspects of life, on the campus, in the world at large, and in the life of the Church itself.

### THE FACULTY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Nearly two years ago, the United Student Christian Council took the initiative of convening the Executives of its member movements to survey the needs and possibilities inherent in a faculty Christian movement. A consultation with representative faculty members was called in November of 1951, and another in March of 1952 to consider the challenges in this area. They resolved to work toward a still more inclusive consultation in the fall of 1952, and to request the administrative assistance of the Commission on Christian Higher Education to work out further plans. With this latter Consultation, held at Berea, Kentucky, in early October of 1952, the Faculty Christian Fellowship was launched and its basic program was planned. During the year of 1952-53 this consisted primarily of holding the first national conference on "the responsibilities of the Christian professor in the academic community," collecting many names of interested individual professors, encouraging many local and regional faculty Christian groups and securing cooperation and support of its work by foundations and denominations.

The Fellowship is not a membership organization; it is rather, as its name suggests, a fellowship. Its roots are in local campus groups of interested and concerned Christian professors, who meet together for study, prayer, and conversation, and in regional conferences called together by sponsoring denominations, associations, or foundations, designed to give intercollegiate expression to Christian faculty concerns. Programs in these groups are extremely diverse. Study materials consist of books on issues in religion in higher education, the Christian faith, and the history and role of the Church, of such pamphlets as the Hazen "Religious Perspectives" series, and of materials presented in the quarterly *THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR*. (A recently prepared annotated bibliography for such groups is now available upon request from *THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR*, as well as a Special Edition of the Commission's Newsletter, *Memo*, which deals with the Fellowship.) The Fellowship is greatly interested in assisting and seeking ways of cooperating with both local groups and intercollegiate or regional conferences of Christian professors. It is anxious to serve whatever needs it may in this area since it is devoted to the special concerns and programs of faculty members.

In order that it may carry on its work and serve these needs most effectively, the Faculty Christian Fellowship requests that all program efforts, organizational resources, and special projects among the churches, associations, and foundations be developed, insofar as

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

possible, either partially or wholly, upon an ecumenical basis. It also requests that its administrative office (257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.) be kept informed about the various efforts which are made in the area of faculty concerns, so that the many diverse opportunities may be widely known. The F.C.F. will, in turn, seek to provide information and services to these groups in any way that it is able to, especially through its three-fold program of regional consultations which are being planned for the next year, the preparation of program and study materials through such media as THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR, and the distribution, from time to time, of such procedural guides, informational bulletins, and program announcements as may be called for.

The responsibility for maintaining the Fellowship as a community of Christian scholars devolves upon certain standing committees: 1. The Executive Committee of about ten professors, elected for yearly terms of offices by the Continuing Committee; 2. The Continuing Committee, a larger group, widely representative of the curricular disciplines, regional areas, types of institutions, and denominational affiliation, called upon for over-

all guidance of the Fellowship's work; and, 3. the Consultants, invited from the churches, associations, foundations and agencies, and seminaries, to give the Fellowship their counsel.

Future plans of the Fellowship call for the arranging of regional seminars during the summer of 1954, the calling of brief consultations during the year and in various parts of the country on important current issues in relation to the Christian vocation of professors, the development of closer relations to other similar movements of professors in this country and throughout the world, and the giving of assistance in every way possible to local campus groups of Christian professors and their intercollegiate or regional conferences. It is the challenge of the Fellowship to work out the details of its relationship to the Commission through its newly-activated Department of Campus Christian Life. This will call for the development of that cooperation which was pledged at Park College, at the first national conference, when the Fellowship asked "that this Department's responsibilities for serving members of faculties be discharged through the Fellowship."

## The Committee on Religion in Higher Education

R. ELIZABETH JOHNS AND KIRTLEY F. MATHER

In "the good old days" when the Student Christian Association in many an American college and university was sometimes referred to as "the biggest thing on the campus," not very much

attention was given to the educational problems that are so widely recognized and so frequently discussed in academic circles today. The orientation of the student Christian organizations was

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

almost exclusively along social, ethical and devotional lines. Emphasis was heavy upon "activities." It was assumed that religious attitudes of students were primarily influenced by their church contacts and their participation in Christian activities. Faculty members served as advisers or counsellors, but the programs were student-centered. Rarely did more than a fraction of the whole academic community come into focus. The curriculum and the content of its courses were accepted—like the weather—with occasional discomfort, but with the idea that nothing much could be done about them.

Inevitably, however, the horizon for Christian work on the campus began to expand. Folks began to talk about the relationship of Christian values to college teaching. "General Education" became an assignment for curriculum committees. "The University Problem" began to be recognized as a meaningful topic for careful consideration. The suggestion was advanced that religion, with its emphasis upon spiritual concepts and values, ought not to be left in an extra-curricular position on the campus but deserved a more appropriate place in any consideration of the university as a whole. Many of the student leaders were alert to the rapidly changing conditions and sought new ways of coping with them. The young men and women active in the Student Christian Movement in New England, for example, stimulated the organization, during the middle nineteen-thirties, of a Faculty Committee on Religion in Higher Education.

But the problems are not confined to any one region. The demand is now

widespread that Christian students *and* faculty members do some very fundamental thinking about the nature and program of the college and university, the ultimate purpose of higher education, and the special responsibilities of Christians in academic life. Responding to these trends, the committee whose work we are now describing, was established in 1944. It is primarily concerned with work at the faculty level and the great majority of its members are college and university teachers, many of whom are in departments other than those of religion or biblical literature. Its emphasis thus far has been upon the organization and support of local study groups in college and university communities, in which faculty personnel from widely diversified disciplines join with Student Christian Association staff and advisers to tackle the obdurate but tremendously insistent problems of religion in higher education. To stimulate and assist these groups, and also individuals in institutions where such groups have not been organized, regional faculty conferences have been held and other projects have been initiated. The record of achievement to date is noteworthy.

A committee such as this can operate effectively only through a considerable number of agents and agencies, widely distributed across the nation. Fortunately, the employed secretaries, both local and regional, of the student departments of the YMCA and YWCA were available, and many of them have worked for the committee with great skill and devotion. In addition, about fifty "Program Associates" were recruited among the faculties of more

than a score of colleges and universities. The call went out for the organization of faculty or faculty-student study groups, for which a syllabus entitled "Higher Education and the Christian Heritage" was prepared and distributed in 1945. Ten of these groups submitted written reports of their process and findings. These were analyzed and summarized in a document, "Higher Education and the Christian Heritage—A Report of Faculty Group Study." Published in 1946, this pamphlet was distributed to the groups participating in the project, to the members of the USCC and NSCY committees on religion in higher education, and to many other interested persons.

The delegates in the Faculty Section of the 1946 National Student YMCA and YWCA Assembly gave helpful consideration to the findings of these groups and to the program of the Committee in general. They recognized the fresh and insistent demand for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and its relevance to the universities. Among the resolutions they adopted, one may find a platform and a directive for the continuing work of the Committee:

"WE BELIEVE that the Christian religion is inescapably involved in the history and purposes of education and the means essential to realizing those purposes . . .

"FURTHERMORE, we believe that the purpose and objectives of local Christian Associations cannot be achieved in an atmosphere and

under conditions which are hindering the highest development of the minds and spirits of undergraduates and faculty; that we must examine the total character of college and university life with particular reference to its effects on the outlooks and values that are being developed among students."

In 1947, the Committee joined with the USCC Committee on Religion in Higher Education to sponsor a three-months visit to the United States by Dr. John Coleman, mathematician and secretary of the University Commission of the World's Student Christian Federation. He visited selected colleges and universities where faculty groups had been working, spoke at conferences, and met in consultation with the two committees. His visit and recommendations were a great stimulus and have had a most beneficial influence upon the thinking of Committee members.

Sir Walter Moberly's *THE CRISIS IN THE UNIVERSITY* has been one of the books most influential among college faculty interested in appraising higher education from the Christian standpoint. Since it was written about British universities to crystallize the results of discussion among Christian university teachers in the British SCM and in the Christian Frontier Council, the committee decided to publish a study outline which would assist groups in its use in the American situation. The services of Miss Winnifred Wygal were fortunately secured for the preparation of this material. The outline

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

was distributed at a strategic time for groups to use it prior to the sessions of the Faculty and Adviser's Section at the 1950 National Student YMCA and YWCA Assembly.

The six sessions of the Section at that Assembly were focused on the theme, "What does God require of us in the University?" Professor Robert Calhoun of Yale, President Paul Limbert of Springfield College, now General Secretary of the World's YMCA, and Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy were among the principal speakers. The attendance ranged from 100 to 150 throughout the week and the pooling of insights and experiences was particularly valuable. The great emphasis placed by the Assembly upon this Section and the increased attention given to its preparatory plans are indicative of the new outlook of Student Christian organizations to which reference has earlier been made.

In its 1949 annual meeting, the Committee attempted to analyze the most significant needs in its field of developing operations. The two chief problems appeared to be well-trained personnel and adequate books. An insufficient number of properly qualified and deeply devoted young men and women are committing themselves to college teaching as a life work. Many Christian teachers are inadequately prepared to meet the intellectual and spiritual challenges that arise in academic circles. Plans were therefore made for the preparation of a book on college teaching as a Christian vocation, designed to help the Christians in college and university faculties and also to pre-

sent the opportunities of this vocation to students in the colleges and graduate schools. The book, edited by Dr. Paul Limbert and entitled COLLEGE TEACHING AND CHRISTIAN VALUES, includes chapters written by nine teachers, each in a different discipline. It was published by Association Press as a companion volume to Dr. Espy's THE RELIGION OF COLLEGE TEACHERS, and both books were off the press just in time for promotion at the 1950 National Student Assembly.

The Committee has been especially successful in its stimulation of regional conferences at which faculty members, staff representatives of the Christian Associations, and "student pastors" from denominational organizations could meet together for consideration of their mutual problems and aspirations. In many parts of the country these conferences are now regularly scheduled on an annual basis. Their value is obvious and it is not surprising that they are receiving increased attention as the years go by. Their nature is indicated by the following data concerning those held during the one academic year, 1951-52.

Wisconsin; 150 faculty members from 14 colleges and universities; theme: Christianity and Scholarship.

Minnesota; 95 faculty members; theme: Christianity and Higher Education.

Rocky Mountain States; 140 faculty members from 30 colleges and universities; theme: The Spiritual Crisis of Our Culture.

Southwestern States; theme: Christian Criteria for Cultural Conflict.

## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

Ohio; theme: The Role of the Christian Professor.

Pennsylvania; theme: What is a Christian College?

New England; 88 faculty members from 30 colleges and universities; theme: The Moral Indivisibility of the University.

Annual meetings of the Committee, usually held in January or February in New York City, have provided significant opportunities for spiritual and intellectual growth as well as for planning programs and projects. They have drawn together a group of 20 or 30 professors, administrators and staff workers from the eastern part of the nation to appraise situations, analyze needs, and think together about problems and their solution. The results of their cogitation have then been shared with corresponding members and associates in the more distant states. The 1952 meeting, for example, gave considerable attention to the problem of communication across "the Christian frontier." In a secular situation, how does one arouse concern for religious concepts and ideals? It was the consensus that a person should be led to the frontier of his secular concerns and induced to raise profound questions before he is prepared to listen to the Christian answer to life's meaning. This led to expression of the desirability of a non-propositional approach that would develop rapport, but that left the unanswered query, how may the Christian witness be fruitfully presented in any non-propositional manner?

At that same meeting, all were agreed that too few persons were available to visit faculty groups and be truly

effective in forums and conferences dealing with the problems with which the Committee is concerned. A list of 18 names was compiled and the persons selected were subsequently invited to allow their names to be suggested for possible assignments in keeping with the purposes of the Committee. An excellent response was secured and the regional staff workers were informed of the availability of these speakers for use by local groups or in faculty conferences.

The feature of the 1953 annual meeting of the Committee was a "Consultation on Academic Freedom" to which a group of selected persons were invited in order that they might share in the consideration of this timely subject. Prof. Alonzo F. Meyers, chairman of the Academic Freedom Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union, opened the session with an analysis of the present situation in the colleges and a survey of the major problems that must be faced. Prof. John Bennett spoke on the meaning of Christian freedom and its relationship to the external conditions of freedom. In the discussion that followed, the participants in the Consultation shared numerous ideas concerning Christian perspectives on intellectual freedom. Special stress was placed upon basic principles that might determine immediate decisions to facilitate the appropriate course of action when a specific campus situation arises. A bibliography and selected material were collected in consultation with the speakers and distributed as part of the follow-up of the session itself. These materials were also used by YMCA-

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

YWCA regional staff in faculty groups at summer conferences.

Since the work of this committee began, nine years ago, there have been numerous developments in the area of Religion and Higher Education which have forced the NSCY Committee to rethink very carefully its special function in relation to other groups. We have welcomed this enlarged concern and have cooperated in many ways with these new evidences of vitality among Christians in the colleges. Questions have occasionally been raised about the need for the continuation of our Committee. We believe, however, that we still have a large job to do and see no conflict with the activities of the various other groups working with faculty. As a movement, with thousands of faculty related to our groups as faculty advisors or board members, we have special responsibility for working with them. In addition, we may have some responsibility to reach out to faculty members not affiliated with the church or not yet prepared to participate in the kind of discipline envisaged by the Faculty Christian Fellowship, related to the National Council of Churches. We feel a special concern for confronting faculty with the ethical and social demands of the Christian faith. Faculty Seminars at our National Student Assemblies should continue; our national committee will be called upon to give clear guidance in planning for these sessions.

From many sources criticism is being levelled at our colleges because of the widespread impression that religion is being neglected if not actually denied on the campuses of our land, particu-

larly among the faculty. The increase in the number of groups concerned to work in this field is encouraging. The trend toward a philosophy of secularism is being reversed slowly. We might say it is being met by a counter trend which challenges us to re-examine our presuppositions and sees the purpose of the university as a community of inquirers interested in reflective commitment. Organizational expressions of concern for Christian work with faculty have multiplied, but certain problems remain to be faced more clearly and incisively. Do we need to stimulate and raise the basic questions of meaning before we can attempt to deal with the evangelistic task of the Christian faith? Dr. Espy's book, referred to above, indicates that many faculty have religious conviction but feel inadequately prepared to articulate and interpret their faith. What are the best structures for providing a fellowship of like-minded teachers where they can share their thinking and explore their common problems? Can the university encourage Christian values without sponsoring sectarianism? How can we recruit more Christian professors? How can we forward the Christian concern of faculty and yet find common cause wherever possible with non-Christians in the university? Many have a deep and genuine concern for moral and spiritual values, a commitment to social justice and human dignity. Does this not merit our alliance with them in a cooperative enterprise where goals are shared? What is the Christian concern for academic freedom in a situation where no com-

mon voice is heard?

Religion is attracting increased attention among faculties and many groups are at work in this field. We are confronted, nevertheless, with

many problems and all of our resources must be effectively channeled if our mission to the university is to be fulfilled and we are to make a Christian witness in the academic community.

## The Revised Standard Version

LUTHER A. WEIGLE

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSV), which was published on September 30, 1952, is a revision of the American Standard Version (ASV), published in 1901, which was a revision of the King James Version (KJ) published in 1611.

The "American Standard Version" embodied the completion by a committee of American scholars of the revision authorized in 1870 by the Convocation of Canterbury, which had resulted in the Revised Version published in 1881-1885 (ERV). This revision had not gone far enough, in the judgment of the American committee invited to collaborate with the British Revisers; and it was agreed that after fourteen years the American committee would be free to publish its own edition, containing the more thorough revision which it desired.

In the meantime, in 1881 and 1882, unauthorized editions of the Revised Version of the New Testament were published in New York and Philadelphia, which incorporated those of the readings preferred by the American committee which had been recorded in the appendix to ERV. It is needless to say that the members of the American committee had not lent their names or their

aid to these editions. In 1898 the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses published a similar edition of the Revised Version of the Bible for the American market, with a preface referring to it as the American Revised Bible. These editions were unacceptable to the American committee, since they contained only the preferences included in the appendix, which had purposely been reduced in number. Accordingly, in 1901, the American committee published *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments translated out of the original tongues, being the version set forth A.D. 1611 compared with the most ancient authorities and revised A.D. 1881-1885. Newly Edited by the American Revision Committee A.D. 1901*. It was copyrighted to protect the text from unauthorized changes. This edition contained the full body of the American committee's preferences, and published in an appendix the British readings they displaced.

In 1928 the copyright of the American Standard Version was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education, and thus passed into the ownership of the churches of the United States and Canada which were associated in this Council through their boards of

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

education and publication.

The Council appointed a committee of scholars to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version and to undertake inquiry as to whether further revision was necessary. For more than two years the Committee worked upon the problem of whether or not revision should be undertaken; and if so, what should be its nature and extent. In the end it recommended that there should be a thorough revision of the version of 1901, which would stay as close to the Tyndale - King James tradition as it could in the light of our present knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek text and its meaning on the one hand, and our present understanding of English on the other.

In 1937 the revision was authorized by vote of the Council, which directed that the resulting version should "embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature."

Thirty-two scholars served as members of the Committee charged with making the revision, and they secured the review and counsel of an Advisory Board of fifty representatives of the co-operating denominations. The Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published in 1946. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, was published in 1952.

On five matters of policy, decision

was reached comparatively early in the Committee's deliberations:

(1) It was decided to abandon the practice of the American Standard Version in rendering the Divine Name YHWH by "Jehovah," and to return to the procedure of the King James Version, which uses the word "Lord" (or in certain cases "God") printed in capitals. This follows the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. The term "Jehovah" is of late medieval origin, and does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew.

(2) It was decided to break away from the literalism and mechanical exactitude which was the English revisers' ideal of "faithfulness" in translation, and to return to the relative freedom and naturalness of Tyndale and the King James Version. The revisers of the 1870's were literalists, especially in the New Testament. Their ideal of translation was a meticulous word-for-word reproduction of the Greek text in English words, using the same English word for a given Greek word whenever possible, leaving no Greek word without translation into a correspondent English word, following the order of the Greek words rather than the order natural to English, and attempting to translate the articles and the tenses with a precision alien to English idioms. The result is that both the English Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901 are distinctly "translation English." The impatient remark of one reviewer in 1881 was not undeserved:

"The revisers were not appointed to prepare an interlinear translation for incompetent school-boys." It was unnecessary, for example, to change the third petition of the Lord's Prayer to read, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." Or to change the statement concerning Jesus in Mark 1:28. "And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee," to read, "And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about."

(3) It was decided not to accept the limitation under which the revisers of 1870 labored in view of their instruction "to limit, as far as possible, the language of alterations to the language of the Authorized and earlier English versions." That was a natural enough instruction. The Convocation of Canterbury rightly wished to keep the English Bible as unchanged as possible, and wanted whatever new patches were sown in to match the old garment. But this effort on the part of nineteenth-century scholars to rewrite a sixteenth-century English classic, in such a way that its misleading archaisms would be removed but not missed, because the scholars would devise other sixteenth-century archaisms to put in their places, was by its nature doomed to failure. It was one thing for William Tyndale in the first third of the sixteenth century, or for Launcelot Andrewes or Myles Smith in the first decade of the seventeenth, to write inspired Elizabethan prose; but it is quite another thing for scholars nearly three hundred years later to attempt to slash and reweave that prose so that no patch would show.

At some points the revisers quite unnecessarily introduced archaisms that are not present in the King James Version. They greatly increased the use of such words as "howbeit," "peradventure," "holden," "aforetime," "sojourn," "must needs," "would fain," and "behooved." They joined the word "haply" to the word "lest" in seventeen cases where KJ did not have it. An example of inserted archaism that seems almost ridiculous is in I Thessalonians 5:18, where KJ reads "This is the will of God in Christ concerning you." The revisers changed this to read, "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward." No good reason can be assigned for this. It was not required by the revisers' own practice; they had used the preposition "toward" three times in verses 14 and 15. It was not a general practice of the King James Version, in which the word "toward" is used some fifty times, "to God-ward" twice, and "to you-ward" and "to us-ward" and "to the mercy seat-ward" once each. It was not suggested by Tyndale, for he had "toward you" in this verse. It looks as though the revisers simply decided that here was a good place to add some archaic color. RSV reads, "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." A similar archaism was inserted in Colossians 1:25, where "the dispensation of God which is given to me for you" was changed to "the dispensation of God which was given to me for you" was changed to "the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward."

(4) It was decided to follow present English usage with respect to the pronouns "thou," "thee," "thy," "thine"

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

and the verb endings "-est," "-edst," and "-eth." In the King James Version these pronouns and verb endings are used for God and man alike. They were then in common English usage. They have now almost disappeared from common speech, but are retained in the language of prayer addressed to God. The Committee felt that it could do no other than adopt this present usage of the English language. The suggestion that "you" be used even in prayer was rejected, since the Committee was instructed to make a revision designed for use in public as well as private worship. It was decided to employ "you" in common speech, and to use "thou" and its correlates in the language of prayer (with the possibility of its use also in such cases of poetic apostrophe as might call for it in modern poetry).

(5) It was decided, however, to preserve the basic structure of the Tyndale-King James tradition, and to seek to retain its terseness, simplicity, directness, dignity, and beauty. The Revised Standard Version is not a new translation in "up-to-date" language. It is not a paraphrase which aims at striking idioms. The Committee has resisted the temptation to use phrases that are merely current usage, and has sought to put the message of the Bible in simple enduring, timeless words that are worthy of the great tradition. This aim is expressed in the preface: "We are glad to say, with the King James translators: 'Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better.'"

There are four reasons for undertaking a second major revision of the King James Version at this time:

A. The King James Version was based upon a few late medieval manuscripts, and these, especially in the New Testament, contained the accumulated errors of many centuries of manuscript copying.

B. New resources are available for understanding the vocabulary, grammar, and idioms of the Biblical languages and for better acquaintance with the history and cultures of Bible lands. The past seventy-five years have been the Age of Discoveries in the Near East. An amazing body of Greek papyri has been brought to bear upon the study of New Testament Greek, and has shown that it is like the spoken vernacular of the first century A.D., and is not the classical Greek which the King James translators in 1611 and the revisers in the 1870's supposed it to be. Much progress has been made in archaeological studies bearing upon the interpretation of the Old Testament. A vast quantity of writings in related Semitic languages, some of them only recently discovered, has greatly enlarged our knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of biblical Hebrew and Aramaic. The analysis of religious texts from the ancient Near East has made clearer the significance of ideas and practices recorded in the Old Testament.

C. The seventeenth-century English of the King James Version is increasingly a barrier between it and the reader. The greatest problem is presented by those English words which are still in constant use but now convey a different

meaning from that which they have in the King James Version. There are more than three hundred such words, which were accurate translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in 1611, but now have so changed in meaning as to become misleading. A striking example is "allege," which now means merely to assert, but in the sixteenth century meant to adduce evidence, to cite or quote authorities. That is what it means in Acts 17:3, yet Webster's *New International Dictionary* cites this text to show that "allege" means to assert without proof. That so good a dictionary could go so far astray is evidence as to how woefully the language of the King James Version sometimes misleads the reader. Instead of "opening and alleging," the Revised Standard Version has Paul "explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.'"

D. The general excellence of the King James Version as "the noblest monument of English prose" must not blind us to the fact that it contains a substantial number of errors in translation, some infelicities in expression, and some renderings that are ambiguous or obscure.

Space is not available for examples of the various defects in the King James Version which are due to (a) errors in the Hebrew and Greek text used by the translators, (b) lack of the present resources for discovering the meaning of the text, (c) changes in the meaning of English words, (d) actual mistranslations or faulty writing by the translators themselves. Some examples are given

in the *Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* and the *Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*. The best lists of examples of groups (a) and (d) are to be found in the literature centering about the revision of the 1870's, notably in the writings of B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, in the book by John Eadie entitled *The English Bible*, in the essays by J. B. Lightfoot, Richard C. Trench, and C. J. Ellicott, and in Philip Schaff's *Companion to the Greek New Testament and the English Version*.

The revisers in the 1870's had most of the evidence that we now have for the text of the Scriptures, though the most ancient of all extant manuscripts of the Greek New Testament was not discovered until 1931, and the most ancient manuscript of any book of the Old Testament was discovered in 1947. They had the great services of Westcott and Hort, and handled the problems of the Greek text of the New Testament very well. But the problems of the Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament were scantily dealt with.

The King James translators made little use of readings drawn from the ancient versions, and made no note of it when they did. The English Revised Version and the American Standard Version in a few cases adopted versional readings for the text, without a note; but their general practice was to cite versional readings in marginal notes rather than to use them in the text. ERV thus cited 240 versional readings, and ASV cut this number down to 46. The practice of RSV is to use only those

## REPORTS AND NOTICES

versional readings which are in the judgment of the revisers necessary to the recovery of the text, and to give in a marginal note the version or versions from which the reading was drawn, together with a literal translation of the masoretic Hebrew. It results in a larger, but more disciplined, use of the versions than was hitherto the practice.

### THE RECEPTION ACCORDED IT

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is widely welcomed, read, and used. Two and a half million copies were sold first year and this sale continues. It has been attacked as the product of "modernists," "communists," and "unbelievers," but these attacks wither under honest scrutiny, and are largely inspired by opposition to the National

Council of Churches and to the ecumenical movement.\* Meanwhile it is coming into increasing use in public and private worship, as well as in private reading and in teaching. And not only here in America, but in many countries and languages, revision of the old translations of the Bible have been made or are under way.

---

\*As a means of exposing the groundlessness of these attacks, an *Open Letter Concerning the Revised Standard Version* has been published, copies of which may be secured without charge by addressing The Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. or 79 E. Adams St., Chicago 3, Illinois. The *Introductions* mentioned above may be secured from any denominational publishing house.

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THE REPORTS AND NOTICES SECTION

Miss R. Elizabeth Johns serves on the national staff of the Y.W.C.A. as an Executive Secretary for the Student Christian Movement in the New England Region. Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Professor of Geology at Harvard University and Chairman of the Faculty Christian Fellowship, has served as Chairman of the Committee on Religion in Higher Education since its formation. This is another in the series of reports pre-

pared by churches and associations regarding their programs and work in the area of higher education.

Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Dean Emeritus of Yale Divinity School and Chairman of the Standard Bible Committee of the National Council of Churches, was asked to prepare this report on the Revised Standard Version. We are grateful to him for sharing his information and insight with us.

# The Index

## Volume XXXVI -- 1953

### ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Christian Freedom and Academic Freedom .....	<i>Williams</i>	11
Christianity, Culture, and Academic Integrity .....	<i>Greene</i>	176
Christian Belief and Intellectual Freedom .....	<i>Harbison</i>	183

### CAMPUS PASTOR

The Christian Ministry to the Campus .....	<i>Elbert</i>	43
--	---------------	----

### CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

The College and the Church: A Partnership .....	<i>Gross</i>	47
National Christian College Day .....		65

### COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Developments in the Department of Campus Christian Life .....		246
The Department of Campus Christian Life .....		319

### COVER DESIGN

The Editor's Preface .....		3
Hammer's American Uncial Type .....	<i>Graves</i>	6
Woodcuts as Illustrations .....	<i>Kredel</i>	7
The Editor's Preface .....		169

### CURRICULUM (GENERAL) AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

The Christian Perspective in Liberal Arts Teaching		
at Beloit College (I) .....	<i>Joranson and others</i>	29
General Education and the Role of Religion .....	<i>Hutchinson</i>	86
The Christian Perspective in Liberal Arts Teaching		
at Beloit College (II) .....	<i>Williams and others</i>	131

### DISCIPLINARY AREAS AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

The Development of Christian Philosophy in America .....	<i>Durfee</i>	34
Seminar on Religion and Science .....		60
A Conference on the Relation between Philosophy and Theology .....		61
Literary Imagery and Christian Understanding .....	<i>Brett</i>	92
Flat Minds, Kind Hearts, and Fine Arts .....	<i>Walsh</i>	100
The Place of Science in Religion .....	<i>Pollard</i>	110
Christian Faith and Natural Sciences .....	<i>Mather</i>	122
The Christian in the Social Sciences .....	<i>Williamson</i>	211
Report on a Seminar on Teaching in the Natural Sciences .....	<i>Baker</i>	247
The Editor's Preface .....		257
Poetry and the Crisis of Metaphysics .....	<i>Scott</i>	273
The Validation of Poetry .....	<i>Knight</i>	281
Science, Poetry, and Politics .....	<i>Larrabee</i>	285
He Digesteth Harde Yron .....	<i>Wilder</i>	293

## ( Index Continued )

### FACULTY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The F. C. F.: Its Development and Future Plans .....	55
The Growing F. C. F. in New York State .....	McKay 57
The Editor's Preface .....	83
The F. C. F.: Its Meaning and Task .....	Bohnstedt 150
The First National Conference of the F. C. F. ....	240

### FACULTY WORK OTHER THAN FACULTY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

British Dons' Advisory Group .....	60
The Commission on the University of the W. S. C. F. ....	Wick 155
A Summary Report of the Committee on Faculty Work in the Episcopal Church .....	Scott-Craig 160
The Committee on Religion in Higher Education of the YMCA and YWCA .....	Johns and Mather 324

### STUDENT CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THE VOCATION OF THE STUDENT

Witnessing on the Campus—the Student .....	Meeks 40
A Transforming Influence upon the SCM's .....	Nelson 62
Asian Students Speak to Americans .....	Orr 249

### TRUTH AND FAITH

The Meaning of Truth .....	Thomas 172
Basic Christian Affirmations .....	Williams 189
Thinking with the Heart .....	Miller 216
Some Concerns of Christian Educators .....	Knoff 220
Toward a Biblical Theology of Education .....	Herberg 259
The Revised Standard Version of the Bible .....	Weigle 330

### VOCATION OF THE TEACHER

The Terrible Responsibility of the Teacher .....	Brown 23
Witnessing on the Campus—the Professor .....	Hale 38
Christian Foundations for College Teachers .....	50
Four Contrasted Professors .....	Scott-Craig 127
Toward a Christian Objectivity .....	Hong 203
The Christian Professor and His Colleagues .....	Scott-Craig 297

### BOOKS REVIEWED AND PUBLICATIONS NOTED

<i>Religious Perspectives in College Teaching</i> , by Hoxie N. Fairchild, Editor .....	Aubrey 66
Annotated Bibliography .....	Smith 67
<i>The Christian Student and the Church, . . . the University . . . the World Struggle</i> , by J. Robert Nelson, Editor .....	Long 78
<i>The Consolidated Report of the Research Study Project, "What is a Christian College?"</i> .....	76
<i>The Unfolding Drama of the Bible</i> , by Bernhard W. Anderson .....	77
<i>A Spiritual Journey with Paul</i> , by Thomas S. Kepler .....	77
<i>Journal of Higher Education</i> , Volume XXIII, Number 7 .....	78
<i>Christian News-Letter</i> , Volume III, No. 12 .....	78
<i>School and Society</i> , Volume 76, No. 1975 .....	79
<i>The Journal of Negro Education</i> (Winter No., 1953) .....	80
<i>The Superstitions of the Irreligious</i> , by George Hedley .....	Wiest 135
<i>The Cultivation of Community Leaders: Up from the Grass Roots</i> , by William W. Biddle .....	Stroup 139

## ( Index Continued )

<i>Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature,</i> by Stanley Romaine Hopper, Editor .....	Walsh 141
<i>Action in the Liturgy,</i> by Walter Lowrie .....	West 145
<i>Ways of Faith,</i> by John A. Hutchinson and James A. Martin, Jr. ....	Dirks 146
<i>The Christian Century</i> (March 25, 1953) .....	148
<i>The Church Review</i> , Volume XXII, No. 3 (March, 1953) .....	148
<i>Information Service</i> (March 21 and 28, 1953) .....	148
<i>The Church under Communism</i> .....	149
<i>Campus Gods on Trial,</i> by Chad Walsh .....	Miller 225
<i>The American Church of the Protestant Heritage,</i> by Vergilius Ferm, editor ..	Carter 226
<i>The Philosophy of the Old Testament,</i> by Charles H. Patterson .....	Eckardt 228
<i>Faith and Moral Authority,</i> by Ben Kimpel .....	Ramsey 231
<i>A Reporter in Search of God,</i> by Howard Whitman .....	Harron 233
<i>The Soviet Impact on Society,</i> by Dagobert D. Runes .....	Pese 235
<i>The Student Prayerbook,</i> by John Oliver Nelson, chairman of preparatory committee	238
<i>Cross-Currents</i> .....	238
<i>The Christian Approach to Culture,</i> by Emile Cailliet .....	Dillenberger 300
<i>The Goals of Economic Life</i> by A. Dudley Ward, editor .....	Stolper 301
<i>Christianity and the Problem of History,</i> by Roger Shinn .....	Ward 305
<i>Christian Faith and Social Action,</i> by John A. Hutchison, editor .....	Hallowell 309
<i>Community Welfare Organization</i> by Herbert H. Stroup .....	Whitley 311
<i>Brother to Dragons,</i> by Robert Penn Warren .....	Wilder 313
<i>The Image of God in Man</i> by D. S. Cairns .....	Nelson 315

### POEMS

<i>Durer's Nativity</i> .....	Kenseth 284
<i>First Day, 1953</i> .....	Swan 296

